

‘Modern Architect’

Warangal, a known hot seat of communist movement in Andhra Pradesh, is where Murali Ramiseti intervenes for the benefit of common man. He leads MARI and its multi-disciplinary interventions.

Born in a farmer's family of Guntur district in 1963, Murali was attracted towards social work at a time when education in social work was not known by many. He took up social work in his graduation. Leadership came naturally to him and he led the students in the college, and participated in several events/protests that helped the poor and downtrodden. Unable to convince the authorities at Andhra University regarding social work in Post-Graduation, he shifted to Nagpur to study the subject and pursue his career.



During his post-graduation, Murali was moved by the Bhopal tragedy. Choosing to work on environmental issues, he joined Centre for Environment Concerns (CEC), Hyderabad in 1986. He walked over 1000 km covering over 200 tribal hamlets to study the situation of the areas that were likely to be submerged by Polavaram dam. This mass contact was a great learning experience for him. He understood the issues facing poor. This made him yearn for direct action to alleviate poverty, which was not the case in CEC.

This made him quit CEC in 1988 and joined Gandhi Santi Kendra, Hyderabad in the Senior Volunteership Program. Radha Krishnaji in Gandhi Santi Kendra gave the required directions to this heart full of sympathy towards the penury and sufferings of the poor. Under his guidance, Murali decided to establish a NGO to work for the poor. At that time, Warangal did not have any NGO. Further, this was also Naxal hot bed. While the state machinery failed the people, the Naxals did not have a mechanism to fulfill the need for services in this area. Hence, Murali chose Warangal district to start his work and establish the NGO.

In 1988, Murali started Modern Architects for Rural India (MARI) with the support from some other friends. At this point, Murali did not have a concrete direction for his work, though he had a lot of enthusiasm for work. The direction came when people from Cheruvu Kommu Thanda approached him and requested his help in liaison with the government for establishing a school in their village. A strong believer in self-help, Murali advised them not to depend on government for all the services and instead, start a school on their own. He went to the village with the idea and found support from an old lady who was permitted her hut to be used as school. A local youth was asked to be the teacher. He convinced the community to pay an admission fee of Rs.10 and a monthly fee of Rs.5 per child; and convinced the community that the proceeds could be used to meet the expenses of running the school. The community finally agreed and started the school named 'Swayamkrushi School'.

Thus, education became his first agenda. He campaigned and promoted another 10 schools on the self-help lines. All these schools are now functional and have been taken over by the government. The other activities that received attention of Murali were:

- Child labour,
- Health and nutrition

The activities related to agriculture received the focus after several farmer suicides were reported in the region. Murali responded to the crisis by participating in watershed programs, tank rehabilitation, non-pesticide management and organic & sustainable agriculture. Murali actively intervened in micro-finance by promoting credit cooperatives. A federation was promoted with twenty cooperatives (34,000 members). The federation and cooperatives now function on their own with minimal requirements of supervision.

Reflecting on the reasons for his success, he felt that his considerate wife, who knew the hurdles and hiccups of the sector, was a strong point. He also felt that recruiting from among the dalits and other backward castes in the 360 villages in which MARI works helped in making the interventions truly democratic and grassroots based.

The organization that he established, MARI, has grown from work in one village to 360 villages by October 2007. Moreover, the growth was consistent. In Murali's words, "I am highly satisfied with the results of my work. However, I also recognize that a lot more needs to be done." Murali is proud of the governance systems that he introduced in MARI, which is a benchmark in itself. The General Body consists of 18 members drawn from various fields of expertise and this is the supreme body of governance of the organization. The general body is broad based to ensure that the members have expertise in all the areas of MARI's development interventions. The general body elects a seven member managing committee for every two years term. This committee is more regularly involved in managing the work of the organization. He felt that several NGOs that have come up in the recent times have left behind the values of volunteerism and respect for human freedom and dignity. This could change with good leadership and the way in which NGOs are managed.

This is where Murali wants to set MARI as an example by its strong, value-based governance systems.

***Information till November 2007**

‘Girijan Development Worker’

Vizianagaram district is in north coastal Andhra Pradesh. This district is home to about 2 lakh tribal people constituting 10% of the district population. D.Parinaidu works for development of tribes in Vizianagaram through various initiatives and interventions of his organization JATTU.

Shri D.Parinaidu is the founder of JATTU (Justified Action and Training for Tribal Upliftment), an organization that works in the tribal villages of Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh. JATTU was set up in 1998 to work for tribal development. The areas of intervention include health, education, savings, natural resource management etc.

Parinaidu was born on July 1st 1961 in Thotapalli village, Vizianagaram district to Gopinaidu and Sanyasamma. After completing his Masters in Arts (MA) and Bachelors in Education (B.Ed) Parinaidu started his career as a government teacher in 1984. During that time period development work drew his attention. Under the leadership of the prominent freedom fighter Shri Vavilala Gopalakrishnaiah, Parinaidu established ‘Samskarana Samakhya’ and undertook anti-arrack and anti-smoking campaigns. He also started a magazine called ‘Samskarana’ and rewarded people who gave up drinking alcohol. He also wrote about them in the magazine. Later Parinaidu worked as officer on special duty, education in the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA).



In 1989, with Gorada as the center, Parinaidu supported the arrack prohibition campaign. For the first time in that region women groups were formed under his guidance. Parinaidu helped these groups in making savings and facilitated the grant of ITDA revolving fund to these groups. At the same time he established ‘Grameena Girijanabhivruddhi Sevasangam’ (village tribal development service association) and motivated and mobilized tribal youth and women towards arrack prohibition. Parinaidu motivated people to take up development programs on their own. During that time building works of government and other organizations in the village were undertaken by the women groups instead of contractors. Gradually, ‘Grameena Girijanabhivruddhi Sevasangam’ gave the impetus to the ongoing scaling-up of ‘Village Tribal Development Associations’ throughout the State.

In 1993 Parinaidu joined as literacy convener of ITDA. During that time Shri Vijaykumar, managing director of GCC (Girijan Cooperative Corporation), took charge as district collector of Vizianagaram. Vijaykumar started community development programs in the tribal areas in which Parinaidu participated actively. Twenty-four tribal youth were trained and through them new tribal women groups were promoted and existing groups were strengthened. This program served as a role model and ITDA project officers from various regions have come to learn about and from this program.

Later Parinaidu realized that he was not able to give his complete attention to development work as a government employee. Therefore in 1998 he went on a sabbatical and set up JATTU trust. Through JATTU thus far he was able to work with 426 tribal villages, 25 nontribal villages in the areas of education, health, SHG formation, natural resource management and other related programs. ‘Maa Badi’ schools have been started.

In 1999 Parinaidu established an associate trust of JATTU called ‘JATTU Bhavasamakhyā’ trust. The new trust got 2 ½ acres of land as donation and Parinaidu use the same for setting up a Sevashram (service ashram) for orphan children and orphan elders. He was able to mobilize Rs.40 lakhs as donation for construction of buildings in the Sevashram. This huge donation stands testimony to the trust, respect and faith that people have come to impose on Parinaidu. The monthly expenditure for managing the Sevashram is around Rs.38000 of which Rs.8000 to Rs.9000 come as donations from people. Currently the ashram has 62 children and 12 aged people. In 2000, Parinaidu worked on the implementation of the subprojects of Poverty Reduction Project (Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP)/ Velugu).

Today JATTU is working as a lead NGO on natural resource management in IKP in 25 villages on 10,000 acres of land. It is implementing environment education programs in 269 schools. Parinaidu wrote 12 books on SHGs, rural development and other initiatives of JATTU to disseminate information to and increase the awareness of people.

He is also serving Kovel Foundation (a trust of tribal Non timber forest produce collectors of AP) as its Managing Trustee.

Parinaidu strongly believes:

- in peoples’ participation and partnership in implementing any development programs
- that development without community participation is not sustainable
- that for sustainable development ecological balance is critical.

He works towards cultivating godly devotion and respect to earth, sky, water, fire and air among the people. He motivates people to safeguard these five elements of nature Going forward Parinaidu desires to see all villages of Vizianagaram district transform into organic villages.

***Information till December 2007**

Management Worker In Development

A journey from IIM-A business school into the thick of development sector – the journey of Shri Pramod Kulkarni into the lives of farmers, SHGs and street children helps give insights into the thoughts of this development worker who touched and continues to touch lives not only in his home state Karnataka but also in Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

Pramod Kulkarni did his Masters in Statistics from Baroda and then went on to study Post Graduate Diploma in Management in IIM Ahmedabad. After passing out from IIM-A he took up a job in TI Cycles as systems analyst. This job did not excite Pramod. He desired to help people and switched to development sector. In an interview to Business India, Pramod said, "I only knew I wanted to help people. I said so on the first day at IIM."



Pramod says it is difficult to precisely say what made him choose development sector but presumes that his childhood influences including a nationalist grandmother, kind father and a very patient mother played a role. IIM-A gave him security stamp and he plunged into development sector. At that time except for a bunch of feelings to help the poor Pramod says he did not have a clear way forward.

Pramod Kulkarni made a debut into development sector by joining PRADAN in 1984 and went on to stay with them for a decade. During this period he worked with partner NGOs – SAMUHA, MYRADA, IDS in the areas of school outreach, agriculture-forestry-husbandry and sheep & dairy development.

In 1990 Pramod decided that the time was ripe for him to take up his own project. Thus, Prerana came into being with focus on developing irrigation facilities for small farmers. Between 1990 and 1998, 250 lift irrigation schemes covering some 600 families were installed. The farmers in Raichur district on the banks of the river Krishna did not know about lift irrigation, while those about 150 km away practiced it. Prerana helped transfer such best practices from one community to another. Prerana could make the lift irrigate on as bankable projects.

During this period Prerana was able to mobilize about Rs.50 lakhs from Government and Rs.50 lakhs as bank loans. Prerana, also contributed Rs.20 lakhs as loans to farmers. Work was undertaken in revitalizing 4 lift irrigation schemes in Mahaboob Nagar district in AP. This gave insights into why schemes go defunct and how to organize farmers, cost of revitalization etc.

Prerana worked with local NGOs in Karnataka in organizing farmers as tank users' societies for managing the tanks which were under the management of minor irrigation department. The societies were involved in developing an integrated tank development plan. Prerana is also involved in promoting SHGs and awareness of women; non-formal education schools for child labourers; building relationships through street plays, picnics and sports focus on building relationships; resettling and rehabilitating displaced families; and involving professionals in rural development. Prerana undertook fellowship program for those interested in social work. 10 potential fellows were identified and support was given in the form of funds, training, hand holding, linkages with other institutions etc.

Prerana is a partner in implementing "Reaching and Educating Children At Risk" (REACH INDIA). This is a project funded by American Institute for Research (AIR). This project is taken up in North Karnataka to mainstream school children and help retain vulnerable children "in School".

In 1998 he increased his time with Sathi (Society to Assist The children in difficult situation) www.sathiindia.org, a project he started earlier. Children run away or are pushed out from home and are living on platforms and fall prey to addictions, sexual abuse and get involved in petty thefts and odd jobs for survival. Pramod says, "A child on the platform never grows up, he just ages." The purpose of Sathi is to rescue them, provide them shelter and care, convince them and parents, and reintegrate the child back in the family. The efforts of Sathi do not stop here. A follow up is done to ensure the well being of these children. Children who are reluctant to go back home are enrolled in "home orientation camps" where they receive love, guidance and care. Children addicted to substance abuse are sent to de-addiction camps.

Till 2000, Sathi was present only in Karnataka. Now its operations have spread to Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. So far, 14,000 stray children including 500 girls have received help through Sathi and almost 340 children every month are rescued and reunited with their parents. Sathi also works in the area of rehabilitation of girls who are trafficked. About 150 girls are so far home placed. The organization also runs 10 Bridge schools for 200 girl children. So far 600 children have been enrolled.

In 2000, Pramod started a project called Vidya Poshak - <http://www.vidyaposhak.org/> for finding financial aid for meritorious students. Apart from this free text books and skill enhancement trainings are given to the student beneficiaries. In all, about 2,500 students have been provided some Rs. 1.5 crore in funding till now, some with help from the IIM alumni network.

Pramod continues to be the guiding force for Prerana and Sathi. He presents an interesting blend of working through people's institutions on one hand and working directly with people (children) on the other.

***Information till January 2008**

‘Gramya’ Rukmini Rao

Rukmini Rao is a champion of women rights. She works for creating social, political and economic opportunities for dalit and tribal women among impoverished communities. Though she works primarily in AP, her work has influenced policies and organizations at various levels and the women across.

Dr. V. Rukmini Rao, is a social and development activist working with women at many levels of Indian society particularly with the poor, underprivileged and vulnerable. She is currently Executive Director of the Centre for World Solidarity (CWS) and on the Boards of the Deccan Development Society (DDS) and Gramya (Gramya Resource Centre for Women, which she founded). She also was a founding member and worked for many years with Saheli (Saheli Women's resource Centre) in Delhi. According to Rukmini Rao although women constitute 50 per cent of the population their share in development is dismal.



Dr. Rukmini Rao was born in 1950, into a traditional family in Hyderabad. She completed her education in Hyderabad itself. Rukmini Rao has a PhD, Masters and BA majoring in psychology. She cherished freedom and independence since being a child and this outlook prompted her to move out of her parental home when she was 24. She took up a job as psychology lecturer in St. Francis Women's college in Hyderabad. Later she moved on to work in National Labour Institute (NLI) and Public Enterprise Centre for continuing Education (PECCE). She worked on organizational change in public enterprises till early 80's. She took up the role of a project director for an Indo-Dutch program on women workers in the garment industry. The conditions in which the women garment workers worked and the harassment they were subjected to disturbed her deeply. This prompted Rukmini Rao to set up SAHELI, a women resource center. She moved back to Hyderabad in 1990's and began to work with Deccan Development Society (DDS) and Gramya.

Through SAHELI Rukmini Rao organized national level anti dowry campaigns. SAHELI activities led to the formation of special cell to deal with women oriented civil cases in Delhi. Women police stations were also established. She organized campaigns against Madhura rape case and campaigns against sati.

Rukmini Rao realized that the middle class rural women are not able to reap the fruits of development unlike their counterparts in urban areas. She decided to work in rural areas and chose her native AP for this. She joined DDS and worked on the issue of dalit women rights. Dalit women groups were formed and trainings were organized to women leaders. Rukmini Rao realized that financial independence is an important harbinger for the women voice to be heard. She worked for the livelihoods of the women and their sustainability. Works were taken up the areas of grain banks, seed banks, Natural Resource Management (NRM) etc. in Basthapur village women shelter was established for women deserted by husband and parents. Rukmini Rao worked with Lambada groups in Nalgonda district. She reacted to girl child deaths there and organized many awareness campaigns through women groups.

Rukmini Rao went on to establish Gramya in 1993 to work for providing political, social and economic opportunities for women particularly dalit and tribal women to help them achieve their rights and improve their lives and livelihoods. Gramya's vision also includes promoting a society where child survival, protection and development among the most impoverished communities are achieved.

Gramya works in Nalgonda district. It partners with NGOs in Khammam district and works with Lambada and dalit families. Gramya vigorously advocated against infanticide and sale of girl child in 10 districts of AP. The work influenced the adoption policies of the government of AP. The scope of girl child protection scheme was expanded. About 800 women were organized into SHGs and linked with government development programs. Through savings from SHGs women have taken up income generation activities. A women resource center for legal aid and counseling was set up.

Gramya promoted sustainable agriculture concepts through trainings and exposure visits. Dry land agriculture and cotton crops have impoverished the farmers in Nalgonda. Gramya undertook soil and water conservation and management activities. Nursery raising was taken up. Seasonal crop loans were provided to farmers. Organic agriculture was promoted and farmers got training in vermicompost and other organic methods. Gramya is promoting non-chemical methods of pest control. All these initiatives led to reduced input costs and higher yields. Food security was achieved through local participation.

Gramya also touched many lives through education. Schools were set up to bring working children back into the fold of education. Bridge school was set up for girls in vulnerable situations. Campaigns through street theatre were held to prevent child labour.

Dr. Rukmini Rao continues to touch lives through Gramya and other initiatives. She says that women rights have still not found adequate space in the development sector. There is not enough dialogue taking place. Rukmini Rao will continue to fight for women rights. She wants to work with women leaders in 6 Telangana districts of AP. She wants to bring changes in the mindset of the women in poverty, build their self-confidence and work towards empowering them. According to Rukmini Rao sheer economic and scientific development cannot be called progress. Everyone in the society should be able to pursue their life with a choice and society should strive towards creating those opportunities. Only then can we see progress in true spirit. □

***Information till February 2008**

Viji Srinivasan

In a society with strong patriarchal leaning, Viji Srinivasan defied all odds and championed the cause of the marginalized and vulnerable women in the backward villages of Bihar and Jharkhand. Reeling under the ills of poverty, exploitation, female foeticide and infanticide, child marriages and girl child trafficking, the women in these areas found a new hope in the cause and work of Viji Srinivasan.

Viji Srinivasan hails from a well-to-do family in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. To her, hunger and poverty were alien. All lives to Viji were beautiful and romantic. But this worldview of hers got a big jolt, when she ventured out to work with pavement dwellers in Chennai. After completing post graduation in Sociology, in 1962, Viji Srinivasan came across a community development program for pavement dwellers in Chennai who were uprooted by the city administration and driven to the outskirts. She took up the project for 6 weeks but continued on for 6 months and this became the beginning of a remarkable development worker in the making.



Today Viji transformed the lives of more than one lakh poor women and girl children. She lived with them, lived like them and worked with them. In the early 80's Viji worked as a program officer at The Ford Foundation. With the learnings she got Viji decided to move to Patna, Bihar. In 1988 she set up an NGO called Adithi which stands for Agriculture, Dairy, Industry, Tree Plantation, Handicrafts and Integration of women. Wasteland regeneration and alternative livelihoods initiated by Adithi changed lives in some of the poorest districts of Bihar.

The poor women in Bihar and Jharkhand faced exploitation and abuse from the rich landlords and upper castes. Viji believed that money is power and she went on to work for the livelihoods of the women to improve their income levels. She recognized the craftsmanship of the Santhali tribe women and gave them trainings in value addition works like Khatwa and Sujuni. Couple of women even learnt English and went abroad to exhibit their work. The exhibition in London's October Gallery fetched them a net profit of Rs.22 lakhs. One woman was groomed to clear the NIFT entrance test.

Under Swashakti (self-empowerment) project of Adithi 568 SHGs were formed which got involved in agriculture, food processing and manufacturing local products. 34000 women were employed under the project. The groups under Swashakti saved to the tune of Rs.7 lakh. Each women saves anywhere between Rs.20 to Rs.150 a month. An SHG for the daughters of sex workers called Chaukhat was formed and they were given training in bag making, screen printing, stitching etc. Chaukhat made a profit of Rs.50000. A child bank is set up in the red-light area of Muzaffarpur which caters to the children of sex workers. Within months of establishing the bank it could mobilize business from 180 clients. The bank also employs street children to disseminate the message about the importance of savings.

As agricultural labourers' women suffered severe exploitation under batai system where only 50 per cent of the produce was given to them and they were also charged for manure, seeds and water. To counter this Viji introduced a novel concept of share cropping to ensure food security. Women were trained in high yielding crop varieties, biofertilizers and crop rotation practices. This helped them to increase the yield drastically. Now the farm services of these women have more demand and they are in a position to bargain for better wages/returns.

Viji went on to establish Mahila Jalkrishak Samuh cooperative through which lease was secured on 800 fishing ponds and about 11000 fisherwomen were able to catch fish without hindrance. Trainings were given in breeding and hatching. Loans were given to build houses and ponds. The fisherwomen have set up market in the village and they fix prices for their catch. Adithi developed 700 acres of wasteland and leased it to people. Lemon grass was planted and oil extracted from it was sold at Rs.200 per litre. Under Adithi's a forestation programs tribals planted about 3.5 lakh plants. Adithi networked with 10 NGOs and gave technical, financial and managerial support to those in need.

Apart from income-generation activities Adithi has also taken up the cause of women education and empowerment. A tribal cooperative group called Gogobaisi was set up and many tribal women learnt to read and write apart from gaining enhanced craft skills.

Viji took up about 25 projects in Bihar and Jharkhand towards eliminating female foeticide, infanticide, girl child marriages and trafficking. To spread her outreach Viji tied up with several other NGOs in Bihar. Appalled by the statistics that about 2 lakh girl children are killed each month in Bihar alone, Viji founded Adithi's Short Stay Home in 1995 as a refugee and adoption center for girl babies. The IEC programs of this Home have indirectly saved children in other parts of Bihar. Also founded in 1995 was IGNOU-Adithi rural study center in Jharmundi for the education of tribal women. The center offers various courses like BA, B.Com, and certificate in Rural Development etc. The text books are written in Santhali language. Viji also set up female foeticide prevention project named Kopal in 2003 and launched extensive sensitization programs and awareness meetings.

Viji also worked with Read Foundation and Pasumai Federation in Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu. She was also HWW Coordinator in South Asia. The crusader of women's upliftment and empowerment, Viji Srinivasan passed away at the age of 67. Her legacy will continue to inspire women across.

***Information till March 2008**

Ravindra Sharma in 'Kala Ashram'

One man's efforts could bring to life many traditional arts and crafts of Adilabad in AP which otherwise would have fallen into obscurity. Livelihoods of many are therefore restored.

Ravindra Sharma referred to as Guruji was born and brought up in Adilabad district of Andhra Pradesh. His father migrated from Punjab 50 years ago. Adilabad was the centre stage of arts and crafts. Items like budabukkalodu, gosamolu, haridasu, kolatam dance, street dramas based on epic tales, religious processions from mutts etc were inducing constant cultural energy into the rural lives. Adilabad is also home to handloom weavers, Naquashi artisans and wood painters. Nirmal paintings are world renowned. Ravindra Sharma grew up amidst these fascinating traditional and cultural influences. He could gain in-depth knowledge of the culture, heritage and economy of Adilabad area. He himself became well versed in fourteen different forms of art. He is a sculptor of national fame. He makes metal statues. He does oil paintings and water colours.



Winds of change have been sweeping through Adilabad like other parts of India and the local traditions and crafts are vanishing at an alarming rate. This loss prompted Ravindra Sharma to work for preserving arts and crafts of Adilabad that he loved growing up and remains fascinated even to date. He organized his efforts and along with like minded people and friends established Kala Ashram in 1979. Kala Ashram was started as an experiment to re-establish the customs and culture of the region. Today this Ashram has evolved into a training center for hundreds of artisans from all over India. The Ashram serves as a role model and living example of how the education built on the foundations of people's lives reflects itself in reality. Ravindra Sharma's Kala Ashram has today become the ideal form of Indian Gurukuls where physical labour and mental awareness are blended harmoniously.

Kala Ashram is an effort towards fostering work related to love for nature and environment, work related to Indian culture and heritage, creativity by arousing aesthetic sense with respect to Indian heritage and traditional science and technology. The Ashram works to bring harmony between artisan and artist and the ancient and the modern. The Ashram has a museum that serves as a resource base for artists and artisans who do not have access to tools and accessories. The dokkulodu or the community historian of the Madiga community borrows musical instruments and scroll from the museum. Every year Ravindra Sarma organizes karigar gurukuls where artisans improve or innovate techniques, pass them on to the younger generations and teach them to groups of other communities.



Bamboo has offered very good livelihood opportunities for the tribals of Adilabad. Ravindra Sharma started teaching the tribals the delicate art of converting bamboo sticks to art works which look akin to ornamental entities. His work enthused learners from National Institute of Fashion Technology, Hyderabad who came to learn bamboo work. His ease with multiple languages especially tribal languages makes people around him feel at home. After the day's work, Ravindra Sharma would read and explain to people in different languages the tales from epics. Though an ardently religious person, Ravindra Sharma uses economics and science to explain to people. He observes studies and documents dying arts. One recent attempt was that of the Bhiksha vruttis who sing/tell the oral history

of other castes while living off their patronage.

The ongoing efforts in Kala Ashram include:

- research and study of all ancient techniques and science, tradition and art forms
- collection and preservation of all articles of use in around Adilabad
- workshops to introduce ancient technology and its usage in modern context and
- revival of folk dances and folk music

Kala Ashram trains tribal youth on craft utility items for a livelihood. Waste management has entered the field of traditional crafts in Kala Ashram. Gond and Kolam tribal youth are trained in crafting utility items from bamboo waste. These trainees under the guidance of Ravindra Sarma and master craftsmen have learnt to make clothes, towel hangers, paper weights, stools, TV and telephone stands etc. These products fetch anywhere between 100 to 300 rupees and have become very popular with people visiting this area.

The plans going forward are to establish a permanent museum for all articles, set up homes that serve as museum, house, workshop and shop for twelve or more artisans that includes teaching of the techniques, life-styles and economics of a particular art form. The Ashram also plans to have an open air theatre, Ranga Sthal for revival of folk music and dances. Also in the pipeline is a Granthalay, a library of rare books on arts and crafts.

Guruji Ravindra Sharma's remarkable efforts to preserve and promote the traditional arts and crafts of Adilabad give inspiration and hope for the future of traditional livelihoods and for people working towards strengthening them.

***Information till April 2008**

Fr. Thomas Kocheri - the Crusader of the Coasts

A Lawyer, a Priest, a Trade Union Leader and an Environmentalist, Fr. Thomas Kocheri is the man who is striving to protect the people who live closer to the earth from those who have detached themselves from the earth. The stories of despair and destitution of fishermen changed him forever and made him to work for the welfare of fisher folk. He brought together the fishermen in the country, leveraging their demands for better treatment from the powers and is aptly called by many as the Crusader of the Coasts.

Fr. Thomas Kocheri was born in Changanasserry, Kerala in 1940 as fifth son in a family of 11 children including seven boys and four girls. His father used to work as a journalist in a catholic news paper. He did all his schooling in Changanasserry and received law degree from Kerala University. While he was in college he met a Redemptorist Priest Fr John Anthony, who had gone to Changanasserry to study Malayalam, the principal language of Kerala State. Inspired by Anthony, Thomas Kocheri wanted to join the Redemptorists. Soon after his priestly ordination in 1971, Fr. Kocheri plunged himself into social activities.



Thomas Kocheri started to work among the Bangladeshi refugees in Raigunj in West Bengal. After this he went to Thiruvananthapuram to work among people from fishing communities. He began to work in a small fishing village called Poothura near Thiruvananthapuram. There he came across some middlemen exploiting the fisher folks. This exploitation was keeping the later permanently on the edge of starvation. He decided to arm the fisher men with knowledge by teaching them to read and write. He found the fishermen hard working, poor and with illiteracy levels ranging from 70 to 75 per cent. He began to take classes for children and at the same time, interacting with the fisher folk.

With the formation of the Anchuthengu Boat Workers' Union during the Emergency days in response to the corruption in one scheme aimed at providing trawlers to the boat workers he entered into the trade union scene in the country. Fr Thomas was elected as the president of the union and the new union declared an indefinite fast in front of the government secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram demanding an enquiry on the corruption in the scheme. Consequently, the fisheries minister ordered an enquiry and the project officer responsible was dismissed.

This experience among the fishing community led Fr Thomas to organize the Trivandrum Independent Fish workers Union. This union later became a state level federation called the Kerala Independent fish workers federation. He also chaired the National Fish Workers Forum from 1982-96.

In 1989, he organized India's biggest coastal environment protest, the Kanyakumari March, in collaboration with many other NGOs. The march mobilized thousands of people including women to fight against destructive fishing gears and water pollution. About 25,000 people took part in that march against Koodamkulam nuclear plant and it ended in police firing.

In 1991, in pursuit of globalization the GOI announced its Joint Venture Policy which invited foreign companies to enter into Indian waters. This had a danger of exhausting our dwindling fish stocks. In response to this policy Fr Thomas brought together all the stakeholders in fisheries to form the National Fisheries Action Committee against Joint Ventures. He went on hunger strikes for this cause twice. As a result of these actions the fisher folk found representation in Murari High Powered Committee that was instructed to look into and redraft the deep sea fishing policy. This led to a ban on new licenses and the cancellation of all foreign fishing.

Fr Thomas actively opposes the commercialization of prawn culture. The scale when taken up on commercial levels will destroy the paddy fields supporting thousands of hard working farming communities. His rationale is simple: Protect the Coast and it will protect us. The fishing grounds and coastal zones around the world are in crisis now and hence he advocates that the fishermen must unite to protect their natural capital and human rights.

Fr. Thomas received many awards for his outstanding contributions to environment in general and towards improving the quality of life of the fishing communities in particular. The awards include, Earth Trustee Award by the Earth Society Foundation, New York, and Sophie Prize from Norway and a gold medal from FIAN International for Socio-Economic Human Rights Protection, Germany.

Fr. Thomas wants the government to acknowledge that the sea is a source of all life and take measures to protect coastal waters and coastal communities. He wants an end to the industrial pollution. In his own words, 'The Life of the Planet and the Dependent Health and Welfare of Humanity must not be sacrificed to the Greed of the Few'.

***Information till May 2008**

Dr Anil Sadgopal - Social Educationist

Education is one of the most powerful tool for reducing poverty and inequality in the country. Ensuring access to quality education for all is central to the economic and social development of India. It is the indispensable duty of the government to provide free elementary education to all the children. Dr. Anil Sadgopal, social educationist is striving to reshape the education milieu so that elementary education will be recognized as a fundamental right.

Anil Sadgopal is from the state of MP. He is a multifaceted personality - an excellent academician, a social worker and educational activist. He obtained his Ph.D in Bio-Chemistry and Molecular Biology in 1968 from California Institute of Technology, U.S.A. After obtaining Ph.D degree, he joined Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) in Mumbai as a fellow and worked there for some years. He resigned the job in order to organize a rural education and development program.



Anil Sadgopal established the Kishore Bharathi Center for Rural Development and Education along with a group of likeminded people. The objective is to encourage the community to avail their rights and entitlements. Efforts were made to check the seasonal distress migration of agricultural labour and to improve agriculture and cattle breeding. He also experimented with the low-cost, high-intensity Hoshangabad Science Teaching Program (HSTP) and initiated that program in 16 government upper primary schools in 1972 which was later expanded to all the 270 plus upper primary schools of the district. He persuaded Scientists at TIFR and Professors at the IIT to come to the villages and towns of MP and disseminate knowledge. Every summer during the 1970s and early 1980s, the Scientists and Professors sat with personnel from the Regional Colleges of Education, the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and government middle school teachers to find new ways of teaching experimental science.

Anil Sadgopal facilitated the setting up of EKLAVYA in 1982 which later extended HSTP to almost 1,000 schools in 15 districts of MP wherein more than one hundred thousand children learned science through an inquiry-oriented, experiment-based and environment-related pedagogy. From the teaching of science, HSTP expanded into social science teaching and, in the process, language teaching began to be looked at in a more creative way.

"Prayog" (experiment) and "Avalokan" (observation) became catchwords at the annual HSTP teachers' workshops in Hoshangabad, where they actually performed the same experiments they would teach to the children. The whole debate on pedagogy rose to new levels. Out of that experience, have emerged some statewide programs in MP on the HSTP model, as well as Ekalavya, a noteworthy centre for educational research and training.

After Bhopal gas disaster in 1984, he joined actively in the struggle of gas victims for obtaining scientific medical treatment and rehabilitation from the government as well as justice from the Union Carbide. Later he became interested in the people's movements and related struggles and participated in worker's struggle in Chhattisgarh. In early 1990's he made a protest against the replacement of education with literacy as a national priority. For him awareness of the need for social justice begins with a child's experience of school. Sadgopal resigned from the Acharya Ramamurthi Commission in protest against the government's backtracking on universalization of elementary education.

Anil Sadgopal calls attention to the unfair system of parallel schools and coaching sub-systems that exist in India while at the very bottom of the education system lie funds-starved and bureaucracy-choked government schools. He envisages a common school system - the Lokshala or People's School - funded by the State, with each local community at the administrative block level running its own complex of elementary and high schools within a guaranteed framework of equal rights for all children.

Anil has undertaken numerous assignments in his life time such as Professor of Education, Head of Department of Education and Dean in the Faculty of Education in the University of Delhi; Member of the National Commission on Teachers, the National Policy on Education Review Committee or the Acharya Ramamurti Committee and Central Advisory Board of Education, CAGE, Member of three CAGE committees respectively on (a) Free & Compulsory Education Bill; (b) Girls' Education and Common School System; and (c) Universalization of Secondary Education; Member, National Steering Committee for Review of National Curriculum Framework, NCERT); Chairperson, NCERT's National Focus Group on 'Work and Education'.

He is a recipient of numerous awards and honors including the Jamnalal Bajaj Award (1980) and Shantiniketan's Rabindra Puraskar (1984) for application of science and technology to rural areas; Vikram Sarabhai Memorial Lecture (1981) and UGC National Lecturer (1988).

Anil wrote two books in Hindi - "Sangharsh aur Nirman" on the trade union movement led by Shankar Guha Niyogi in Chhattisgarh and "Shiksha mein Badlav ka Sawal" on education policy and the need for social intervention in education. He also wrote many articles on various issues like impact of globalization, policy analysis etc. Anil believes that the government schools in India are like squalid crèches where parents can leave their children when they go to work; that too, only for a few years, until the children themselves go to work. Going to a government school is perceived as an utter waste of a child's time, and with reason. He calls for a change in this situation. Government should not just focus on literacy; rather it should focus on providing quality education to all the children. Then only the nation can progress. ***Information till June 2008**

Zero Budget 'Farmer' Subhas Palekar

Subhas Palekar is a pioneer and strong supporter of natural farming. He had been instrumental in popularizing 'Zero Budget Farming' using natural means and process.

Palekar was born on July 1st, 1949 in a village called Belur in Amaravathi District of Maharashtra State. After finishing his graduation in Agricultural science, for some years he experimented in his own farmland setting out British devised ways of fertilizers and pesticides and became an utter failure. Then he set out to research on how our ancestors did so well in agriculture without any of these chemicals. He consulted the Vedas, and the ancient wisdom literature. The result is a revolutionary, path breaking method, which Palekar calls as 'Zero Budget Natural Farming'.



Zero Budget Natural Farming advocates cultivation of diverse species of crops depending on site specific agro climatic conditions. Mixed cropping provides buffer against total failure of single crop and also widens the income source of farmers.

Palekar's ideas on natural farming evolved from his research done in Maharashtra between 1988 and 1996. For 8 years Palekar tried his method in his own soil and replicated it in various other fields tasting success every time. After getting good results, he asked other farmers to follow. After seeing the amazing results of this technique, more and more farmers started to follow his technique and later it became a farmers' 'Andolan'.

According to Palekar, "Nature had created vegetation and since million of years, this vegetation was living without any assistance of mankind. Forests gave a large number of export-quality fruits every year without cultivation, without manure, fertilizers, spraying, hybrid seeds and irrigation and without any human assistance. God had established his special self-developing, self-nourishing and self-sufficient technology to grow and to give in severe famine also. That is why I decided to conduct research in this field."

Palekar says that the desi cow's urine, dung and milk have all the qualities required to rejuvenate the soil. Just one desi cow, is all that is required to maintain a 30 acre farm. Palekar's model of farming include

- beejamrutha a mixture of water, desi cow dung and urine, soil from the surface of the field and lime can be used to treat seeds, seedlings or any planting material
- jeevamrutha a mixture of water, desi cow dung and urine, jaggery, flour of any pulse and handful of soil from farm or, forest

Beejamrutha protects the crop from harmful soil borne and seed borne pathogens during the initial stages of germination and establishment. Jeevamrutha promotes immense biological activity in the soil and makes the nutrients available to the crop.

Palekar condemns the university taught concept of burning the leftover plants after harvest. He says that these are to be left over in the soil itself by turning them over into the soil. This process of 'mulching' helps the soil prepare its own manure. Seed and plant diseases are treated with the help of cheap and easily available materials like buttermilk, black pepper, neem and tobacco. He believes in a method of cultivation which makes the already existing nutrients in the soil, such as phosphate, potash, zinc and calcium available in absorbable form by the plants. Besides enabling the growth of safe, healthy produce, Palekar's model eliminates the cost of fertilisers, pesticides and seeds and greatly reduces the incentive to borrow, one of the chief causes for farmer suicides in the country. His thoughts on agriculture are available in a two-volume book in English, The Philosophy of Spiritual Farming: Zero Budget of Natural Farming.

Palekar distinguishes his model from organic farming, usually seen as the alternative to chemical farming. While vermicompost, biodynamic and other kinds of organic farming avoid the use of artificial chemical inputs they still violate the principles of natural farming since their methods do not enable processes of self-replenishment found in nature. Palekar organized several workshops on Zero Budget Natural Farming in Maharashtra and other states of the country. After meeting with considerable success in Maharashtra, Palekar aroused curiosity among farmers in Karnataka. Over 50,000 farmers are now practicing his method on their fields in Karnataka.

Palekar is now spreading his efforts into North India. Punjab being the major contributor to country's food basket, he started with 25 models in various villages of Punjab. Palekar hopes that this movement will swell to other places in near future. Subhash Palekar, popularly called 'Krishi Ka Rishi', is a man with a mission. Karnataka government conferred Basavashree Award-2005 on Palekar, recognizing and revering his "Silent Movement" in Indian agriculture.

Palekar wants agriculture to remain a viable livelihood option in rural India on which more than 60 per cent depend. He wishes to renew faith in natural farming and its ecological sanity at a time when talk of economic growth rates, IT, biotechnology, India's imminent super-power status and the like threatens to colonise our imagination of the future.

***Information till July 2008**

The 'Collective' Woman Sheelu

Sheelu Francis, is an outstanding leader of 1.5 lakh strong Women's Collective in the state of Tamil Nadu. She is the elected Executive President of Tamil Nadu Women's Collective (WC) which comprises 37 Federations of Groups of rural and marginalized women. Sheelu is also an international spokesperson on gender issues. She also speaks at various forums about impacts of international trade, debt and activities of transnational corporations on local development, food security and sovereignty.

Sheelu Francis is born in Kerala and spent her childhood and schooling in Kerala. Later on her family moved to Tamil Nadu and settled there. Sheelu holds a Masters in Social Work and also a Masters in Political Science. She also holds a diploma in Gender and Development from University of London. Currently Sheelu is pursuing Phd in Law from Presidency College in Chennai.

Sheelu started her career as a part time teacher in nonformal education school. Later she joined as project director of Don Bosco Social Service Society, a Chennai based NGO working for an Integrated Urban Development (Slum) Project in Chennai and soon went on to assume responsibilities as its head. She got the best social worker award in this project. Sheelu acknowledges that it is in the slums she got her life time experience about the situation of women living in slums.

Sheelu later joined Oxfam as project officer where she learnt more about NGO sector. During her stay at Oxfam, Sheelu was coordinator for the Gender Unit in Asia. Soon Sheelu realized that she is more a field worker and therefore quit Oxfam and with some of her colleagues she started a group to work on women's issues in 1994.

Her realization that there is dearth of women leadership in the country led her to start Women's Collective. The motto is 'strengthen ourselves to strengthen others'. The WC started with 6 full time staff and today it has grown to 250. WC is today home to 1.5 lakh women from 7000 SHGs spread over 2000 villages in 20 districts. These SHGs are federated as 37 units.

The WC works for the empowerment of rural and marginalized women and dalits in Tamil Nadu. The group's activities focus on awareness and education, formation of sangams (groups) and savings and credit groups in the villages, networking, campaigns, demonstrations, solidarities, holding women's conference and exposure visits, land development, organizing farming and food security programs among many other activities. According to Sheelu, one of the most innovative economic approaches to village development is TNWC methodology of initiation. The basis is participatory learning. It begins with village mapping, identifying the poor, their needs and their resources, and identifying those who take credit from the moneylenders. Gradually villagers are shown what happens when the money stays in the village instead of being siphoned away. The key idea is to build economic, political and cultural power within the marginalized, particularly the women. Sheelu says, empowerment as a process is crucial and education for empowerment is the core of the collective's endeavor.

Except for 37 staff salaries which are met by Christian Aid the rest of the 213 staff salaries come from membership fees, service charges from groups and contributions. The support from Christian Aid is now ending and WC is heading to become completely independent by raising funds locally. They have appointed a dedicated person to take care of this.

The members of the WC started contesting in Panchayat elections since 1996 and in 2006 they actually contested under WC banner. More than 200 women got elected of which 78 have become sarpanchs. Due to WC efforts the percentage of voting in villages went up to more than 90 per cent. Women political front has been created and waiting to plunge into state level political system to create alternative political power systems.

Apart from women's issues Sheelu also gives time to develop organic farming. Farmer's collectives and seed banks are formed. Innovative farming models including SRI method of cultivation is practiced.

Sheelu has conducted several national and international training workshops and seminars on gender issues, participatory methodology, saving and credit management, watershed, evaluation, project appraisal and Panchayati Raj. She has also organised public hearings and conferences on violence against women and the impact of globalisation on women. Besides being associated with TNWC, Sheelu is also working as a freelance consultant in issues related to women and social development in various states and countries. Sheelu started a Women Staff Association for women working in the NGOs as a platform for solidarity, placement and learning. She is part of National Alliance for Women, Asia Pacific Network for Food Sovereignty and South Against Genetic Engineering.

Sheelu is a recognized international PRI trainer and worked directly with Robert Chambers.

Realization that today's children are future leaders led Sheelu to work with children for the past 3 years. Children Panchayats are organized and they are taught value education. Children are also taught latest trends and the stands they have to take on issues like globalization etc.

Sheelu says the current focus is on unionizing the unorganized sector.

WC inspiration goes beyond Tamil Nadu. Women in Orissa and Chhattisgarh are motivated and collectivising.

***Information till August 2008**

‘Timbaktu’ Bablu

Choitresh Kumar Ganguly is showing people how to take up and carry forward protection and regeneration of degraded, drought-ridden lands in South India. Using simple, natural techniques, he is helping community to improve the productivity of their land, take control of their surroundings and improve their livelihoods. Choitresh Kumar Ganguly also known as Bablu is famous for the forest regeneration work done successfully in Timbaktu collective of Anantapur district in Andhra Pradesh and the spread of the methodologies to the drought prone areas of the country.

Bablu studied commerce at Bangalore University, worked as a political and theatre activist for 12 years. While in theatre he came close to the rural people. Then he formed the Timbaktu Collective with other like-minded activists to understand whether the conventional methods followed are benefiting them actually. Inspired by the book One Straw Revolution by Masanobu Fukuoka he decided to go the natural way. His acquaintance with Bill Mollison's permaculture further inspired him to do his work based on the philosophy of natural farming and permaculture.



Bablu chose Anantapur district in Andhra Pradesh for his natural way. It is one of the most arid districts in India, with an average rainfall of 540 mm per year. The problem of drought is further intensified with large scale deforestation and soil erosion. Groundwater levels have dropped as the water intensified crops are raised in these areas. Problems of improper resource management by the communities led to the depletion of the resources. Slowly people started migrating out of the district. These problems are common to most of the drought affected areas and where resources are mismanaged. Many a time to promote reforestation such drought affected areas were encouraged to grow foreign species of plants and monoculture mainly focussing on the pulp, wood and firewood. There were not attempts to develop the original ecosystem of forests.

Bablu planned to revive the dry and degraded land at Timbaktu through natural means. He terraced the undulating land, built water channels and mini earthen and stone dams to retain rainwater, and prepared the ground for planting. He built a nursery to grow indigenous seedlings and collected seeds from the nearby forests, especially those of lesserknown species that the Forest Department had not used. He also had seeds brought in from seed banks in other parts of the country to experiment with their suitability to the local terrain. Existing bush trees were trimmed to encourage growth, and though the first newly planted seedlings did not take root easily, with time, varieties such as neem and tamarind began to grow. Fire breaks were made in the surrounding hills to prevent summer forest fires, and the area was patrolled heavily to stop unauthorized tree cutting. There are now over 90 species of plants, 60 different species of birds, many varieties of snakes that keep the rat population in check, and animals such as porcupines and wild pigs in Timbaktu. Bears, foxes, and jackals also roam the area, and peacocks have returned to the hills.

Bablu formed a Forest Protection Committees in the nearby village of Mushtikovila and Kogira with representatives of landless labour, the village head, local nongovernmental organisations, and women. The committees are protecting about 1,000 and 600 acres of wasteland respectively. They employed forest watchers to have a check on cutting and transporting the trees illegally. Town Council imposes severe fines on transgressors. This way the tree felling has fallen drastically. Desilting activity is also taken up by the Mushtikovila Committee where farmer contributes towards labour and finance. Bablu has developed an effective methodology of local participation, government sanction, and technical expertise to enable the regeneration of the wastelands. He is spreading the lessons learnt at Timbaktu and Mushtikovila through the Anantapur District Environment Protection Committee of which he is the founding member. The 24 members of the Committee have undertaken the funding of plant nurseries and the protection of almost 5,000 acres of land. They are also actively promoting the concept of natural regeneration to other organisations, including Action for Food Production, a national nongovernmental organisation with which Bablu is conducting a survey of another 7,000 hectares of cultivated and uncultivated wastelands.

Bablu has successfully rebuilt an agro-forest habitat on a 32- acre piece of land situated in one of the worst drought affected districts in India. It was facing desertification when he took it over in 1991. Beginning with systems to retain rainwater, collect seeds, and police tree cutting in the surrounding forests, Bablu has developed a holistic approach to regeneration which has restored the former ecosystem. Many different species of plants, birds, and animals now flourish in the area.

Bablu is one of the joint conveners of the ‘Jan Vikas Andolan’ (People's Welfare Movement), a federation of activists from throughout India that monitors development policies. He is the founding member of the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural Labourers Union. Bablu was selected as Ashoka Fellow in 1993 for his holistic approach in regenerating the agro-forest and positively impacting the eco-system through community participation.

Having achieved success on this first plot, Bablu is now translating his methods into a program that can be used on many other pieces of degraded land. He is spreading his Timbaktu approach to villages in the region through an alliance of voluntary agencies, agricultural unions, and village volunteers. The alliance is initiated by the people, and their commitment to protecting their land and making this approach work is high. In times when desertification is threatening many lands around the world, Bablu's work shows a model for way forward.

***Information till September 2008**

REDS Bhanuja

Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh is known for its rich heritage. Vijayanagar Dynasty considered the golden period in Southern India prevailed in this region. The historical remains can still be seen in Lepakshi, Penukonda and other places. Anantapur today is known as one of the backward districts of Andhra Pradesh. It is the second district in the country that receives very low annual rainfall. It receives less than 500mm per year. Only 15% of the cultivable land is under cultivation due to lack of water. Out of the 4 million people that live in the district, more than half are in deep debt spiral. In this drought prone district, Bhanuja Rao is doing commendable work towards improving livelihoods of the marginalized sections of people.

Bhanuja Rao was born on April 10th, 1969 as elder daughter of Sri Cheruvu. Siddhaiah and Kullayamma in Badavandlapalli village of Nallamada mandal of Anantapur district. Her father is a small farmer. Though they are having two acres of land, part of it is not cultivable. Their family suffered lot of financial problems in early days. Bhanuja hails from the so-called lower caste and had to face lot of discrimination from the upper caste people in addition to her poor economic condition. All the other lower caste families in their village suffered the same kind of discrimination. Bhanuja Rao's father mobilized all the people of their community to fight against discrimination. He used to conduct lot of meetings to educate the people. Young Bhanuja used to participate in those meetings very enthusiastically. These childhood experiences and exposure laid strong seeds and became the foundation for her development work in future. She became determined to do something for the upliftment of women and lower caste people.



Bhanuja completed her primary education in her village itself. Due to their bad financial situation her father joined her in a social welfare hostel to pursue further studies. At that time she mobilized all the other inmates of her hostel to fight against poor facilities in the hostel. While pursuing her 10th standard, her father encouraged her to participate in a training program on Agricultural Cooperatives conducted by Young India Project.

Bhanuja's father is a traditional song and story teller. He used to tell the drought stories in the form of songs in the surrounding villages. Bhanuja actively supported her father by preparing his schedules, designing concepts etc.

Bhanuja got married at an early age of 17 years. She worked in Young India Project for about 10 years. As her interest is to work for the downtrodden people, she decided to leave that project to do something on her own. Eventually, she started "Rural Environment Development Society" (REDS) in Kadiri with an objective of improving livelihoods of marginalized people and to work towards women empowerment. She organized many movements for abolition of child labour system, human rights protection, dalit empowerment etc. In the initial years REDS actively got involved in advocacy programs but later from the year 2002 it started implementing livelihoods programs.

Under the dynamic leadership of Bhanuja REDS has been implementing diverse activities successfully such as Sustainable Agriculture, Natural Resource Management, Comprehensive Land Development Program, Orphan Children Home, Anti Human Trafficking movements etc. Started in 15 villages of Kadiri mandal, REDS, has now expanded its activities to 95 villages in 4 mandals (173 villages indirectly) benefiting 4500 (50,000 indirectly) people.



When National Rural Employment Guarantee Program (NREGS) pilot program was implemented in Amadaguru, Kadiri, Nallamada mandals REDS conducted a survey on the poor women who can work but unable to go because of having small children at home. REDS has taken steps to join the children at the local child care center (Anganwadi) so that their mothers can go to work and earn some income to their families. REDS also appointed one care taker to the children.

REDS has conducted training programs on Non Pesticide Management to the women in that area. Now the NPM activities Have expanded to 45 villages. About 2000 women are practicing NPM techniques in 9000 acres of land. The women groups organized by REDS are supplying organic fertilizers to all these NPM farmers.

Disturbed by the difficulties faced by the women both in domestic and work place, Bhanuja set up a family counseling center through which she is trying to resolve the women problems.

Bhanuja continues to bring about a change in the lives of Marginalized people through her Rural Environment Development Society. Going forward she desires to help more and more number of people in their struggle for development.

***Information till October 2008**

The 'Glacier Man'

For an outsider, Ladakh is a beautiful place with nature at its best. But for the people who live in Ladakh, it is a cold desert making their survival a tough battle. For the Ladakhi farmers it is tougher as the fate of their crops entirely rests on the whims and fancies of the nature. And for 73 year old Chewang Norphel, Ladakh gave the right mix to make glaciers! Chewang Norphel popularly known as the "Glacier man" managed to generate water and greenery in this barren landscape by creating artificial glaciers.

Ladakh region gets just about 7 cm of rain every year and water shortage is acute between March and June. This is the time when Ladakhi farmer's sow wheat, barley and peas. They have to wait for glaciers to melt, which happens only after July. Any delay in receiving water would cause huge crop loss to these farmers. Norphel saw the problem and also a solution here.



Chewang Norphel was born into a farmer's family of a tiny village called Skarra, which is on the outskirts of Leh. Norphel's family like other farmers in the area depended entirely on the melting snow from natural glaciers to irrigate their fields. After completing his education, Norphel joined as a civil engineer in the Jammu and Kashmir state Rural Development Department. His job was to make zings (small tanks fed by run-off from melting glaciers). As a part of his job, he used to visit many villages in that area. Whenever he visited a village he heard nothing but the desperate pleas by the farmers for water. So much moved by these pleas, he decided to do something for the benefit of these poor farmers.

One day he noticed a helper in his backyard leaving the tap open to prevent water from freezing in pipes. Seconds after flowing from the tap, water froze in the connected drain; and frozen water kept getting pushed away with more water flowing into the drain. This phenomenon sparked in Norphel the idea of creating artificial glaciers.

As always the challenge that any new idea would face, when Norphel first presented his idea, no one believed him. Officials were doubtful and villagers were not ready to accept the concept. He held meetings with village elders to explain the benefits of artificial glaciers. Gradually, his enthusiasm caught on and villagers agreed to get involved in the building of artificial glaciers.

Norphel's first project was taken up in 1987 in Phugtse, at a height of about 14,760 ft. Using some local skills, he built the artificial glacier from stone embankments and a few hundred meters of iron pipe. First, water from an existing stream was diverted through iron pipes to a shady area of the valley. From there, the water was made to flow out onto a sloping hill at regular intervals along the mountain slope. Small stone embankments impede the flow of water, creating shallow pools. During the winter, as temperatures drop steadily, the water in these small pools freezes. Once this cycle has been repeated over many weeks, a thick sheet of ice forms, resembling a long, thin glacier. Norphel's average glacier is 600 ft long and 150 ft deep and can collect 6 million gallons of water, enough to sustain four villages. Though half of it is lost to seepage and evaporation, it sustains four villages and 1,500 farmers. It also recharges local springs and replenishes ground water. The largest artificial glacier so far is the first one in Phugtse, which is 2 km long.

There are several advantages of an artificial glacier over a natural one. To start with, it is closer to the village and at a comparatively lower altitude. Natural glaciers, on the other hand, are located way up in the mountains and they melt slowly in summer, releasing water to the villages quite late. Early water release from an artificial glacier enables the farmers to get water a whole month before the snow starts melting on the mountaintops.

So far, 10 glaciers have been built in Ladakh under Norphel's supervision. As more and more glaciers are being constructed all over Ladakh, more and more barren land is coming under cultivation, providing better opportunities to poor and marginalized communities in the region. Norphel hopes that solving Ladakh's water problems will help slow down the migration of the younger generation to the plains.

A year after Norphel retired from government service, in 1996, he joined as project manager for watershed development for the Leh Nutrition Project, a local civil society organization. Now he is working as chief project officer of this organization.

For his efforts, Norphel has been awarded the Far Eastern Economic Review's 1999 Gold Asian Innovation Award.

At a ripe age of 73, Norphel is also trying to address other concerns of Ladakhi people. His organization is building greenhouses and lambing sheds in areas like Changthang where it is impossible to plant crops because of the severe cold. Water reservoirs with lock systems and water releasing valves are being built in villages to ease the farmers' burden. For the past couple of years, Norphel is promoting the concept of workshops for training teachers and anganwadi workers. "A glacier can irrigate fields, but you need to irrigate young minds, too, and that's why you can't ignore basic hygiene and education" is what Norphel believes. Let us hope this glacier man continues to irrigate many more minds and fields

***Information till November 2008**

Udaya Shankar In NRM

Udaya Shankar was born in Bahu Balendruni Gudem village of Krishna district, AP in the year 1946. Even though he belongs to a remote village, he proved his talent in education since his early childhood. With his excellence in education, Udaya Shankar went on to complete Masters in M.Sc (Tech) in Geophysics from the Post Graduate College of Science and Technology of Visakhapatnam.

After completing Masters Udaya Shankar worked as Research Scholar in Andhra and Osmania Universities from the year 1971 to 1974. Later he joined Action for Food Production (AFPRO) as a Geophysicist. His job was to bring awareness to village level organizations in the issues of management of drinking and irrigation water, soil conservation, livestock, education and health etc. From 1974 to till 2003 i.e. for a period of about 30 years he worked in AFPRO in various designations. During that time he visited many villages. He spent days and days in the villages campaigning on these issues. Under his leadership AFPRO has taken up various issues at state and national levels.



Agriculture is the key factor to rural economy. Majority of rural people depend on agriculture and allied activities. Majority of farming in India is rain-fed. If there are rains, there are crops and only if there are crops there are works. But with climate changes rainfall is becoming erratic and also seems to be decreasing. Many rural people are not adequately aware of rain water harvesting which they can use in the seasons when there are no rains. In many cases, even the governments and NGOs are not completely educated about the process of harvesting the rain water. After the rainy season people are forced to migrate in search of work. The women groups and youth groups that exist in the villages don't know how to face the drought conditions and increase the incomes of people. In these circumstances AFPRO started sensitizing people in various villages on these issues. Trainings were also given on the issues of water resource management, soil management and livestock management etc.

The first watershed program by AFPRO was implemented in Revjav village of Maharashtra in the year 1970 under the leadership of Udaya Shankar. The program was successful. By seeing its success the villagers of Devsampulagav came forward to implement the same kind of program in their village. AFPRO has succeeded in making people more participative in the implementation by motivating them towards watersheds. AFPRO formed user groups in the villages, trained them in the watershed management issues, provided technical support and handed over the responsibility of managing the watersheds to these groups.

The watershed programs of AFPRO are quite successful that people started harvesting two crops in a year from the land where it was once upon a time, difficult to cultivate even single crop. The barren lands started becoming green. Livestock increased. Many organizations from all over the country and even some international organizations, visited these villages to learn about this successful program. Udaya Shankar played a key role in designing the watershed program as a successful model for poverty reduction.

Apart from water conservation programs, AFPRO also implemented various other programs relating to health, education etc. Udaya Shankar successfully led all these programs. He also presented many papers on Water management, Forest management, Fisheries and Coastal Regulation and Remote Sensing in Noel river basin study etc. He has formulated the Water Resource Development Manual for UNICEF as its official coordinator. He also worked as an adviser to many national and international organizations and also participated in the evaluation of many programs of various organizations.

Udaya Shankar worked in AFPRO for almost 30 years i.e. from 1974 to 2003 in different capacities. When he was a unit manager of Hyderabad unit in 1980 he nurtured his team as the best team in the entire country. Since 2005 Udaya Shankar is working in Center for World Solidarity (CWS), a Hyderabad based NGO, as its NRM (Natural Resource Management) adviser. Water, Forests, Environment and Fertilizers are his core areas of work. He has in-depth understanding about these issues.

Udaya Shankar's philosophy is that , 'what ever work one can take up, he/she should do it with full commitment'. Before taking up any activity he always poses two questions: Is it going to increase the number of days of employment of the rural poor? and Is it going to benefit poor in any way?

Udaya Shankar believes that India's history is based on water. He envisages a Comprehensive River Based Management System. With more than 30 years of experience in development sector and with many successes to his credit Udaya Shankar continues to inspire us as a renowned NRM worker and yet so humble.

***Information till December 2008**

Development Guru - Dr PDK Rao

Dr. P. Durga Kameshwara Rao is a Nuclear Physicist turned into a development worker. He has inspired many development workers across Andhra Pradesh and called by many as "Guruji". He has founded an organization called "Sodhana" to work in the areas of education and dalit and tribal development livelihoods' introduces this simple and humble man who at 70 still continues to contribute to the development sector by nurturing many people for development sector.

Dr P. Durga Kameshwara Rao after being trained as a Nuclear Physicist went to United States to start his career. He taught nuclear physics in the States and stayed there for 11 long years. In the 80's he returned to India. Dr Rao, popularly called PDK Rao was influenced largely by Vinobha Bhave and his Bhoodan (Land donation) movement. With this inspiration, he decided to stay back in India and work for the poor and downtrodden people.



From the savings he made in the States, Dr Rao purchased a house in Hyderabad and rented it out. His plan was to use the money from rent to meet and manage his needs. He decided not to marry. After leasing out his house he started walking around entire state of Andhra Pradesh to figure out where to start his development work and also to understand the real situation of poor and marginalized people in the villages. His search has stopped at Chipurupalli village of Vijayanagaram district of Andhra Pradesh. He decided to stay there for the remaining part of his life.

Since the beginning Dr Rao focused his work on education, dalits, tribals and stone cutters. He spent time with these people, engaged in conversations with them to find out their problems. He realized that organizing them into groups can possibly provide a solution to many of their problems. Therefore Dr Rao, focused on organizing people around their livelihood activities. He formed a cooperative of stone cutters and linked the cooperative with Indian railways. With this move many of the stone workers were able to get work and also receive reasonable wages.

Dr PDK Rao also worked for the welfare of the people from Kurakula community who are predominantly vegetable cultivators. He organized them into collective and worked towards increasing their productivity. He linked the organization of the vegetable cultivators to the hotels and hostels and ensured a consistent and fair-price market for their produce. He also worked with Ponduru weavers in association with 'Dastakar', an organization working with weavers in Andhra Pradesh.

Another area that Dr PDK Rao is fascinated is education and empowerment of dalits. Towards this end, he worked closely with the education department and Scheduled Castes Corporation to find out solutions to many problems in these areas. He is instrumental in pioneering Community Development Processes in the areas of education and dalit empowerment.

Apart from being a development worker Dr Rao is also a guide and mentor to many development workers. Many people from different facets of life continue to be inspired by his simple life and selfless devotion to the cause of developing the poor people. His house at Chipurupalli is like a Gurukul. Many young people from different places come and stay with him for some period of time to learn from his experiences. Dr Rao nurtures them in his own way. Though all the people nurtured by him did not take up development as their primary career they continue to contribute their bit to the cause of development.

With requests from many people Dr Rao founded a trust named "Sodhana" (which means Search) in Chipurupalli. But he did not allow any money to flow through Sodhana. He and his organization remains a facilitator. He links the community organizations to the government departments, donors and funding organizations. Dr Rao serves as a bridge between the people in need and the people who can fulfill or deliver these needs.

Apart from being a founder trustee of Sodhana, Dr Rao served as a managing trustee of Kovel Foundation, an organization working for tribals in the agency areas of Visakhapatnam. He continued his association with them from the year 1996 to 2001. Currently, he is one of the nominated trustees of Kovel foundation. He is also a trustee for 'Jattu Trust' which is working in the areas of education and tribal development in Vijayanagaram district. Dr Rao also co-founded the Community Coordination Network (CCN).

At the age of 70, Dr PDK Rao, is still actively involved in the community development activities of various organizations he associated with. Many development workers in Andhra Pradesh take pride in recognizing themselves as mentees of PDK Rao. In spite of all the feathers in his cap, Dr Rao remains so humble and leads a very simple life and continues his selfless service for the poor and the downtrodden people in the society.

***Information till January 2009**

Friend of Grassroots Innovators, Anil Gupta

Strengthening the capacities of grassroots level innovators and inventors and facilitate their development is the crucial thing in the Nation development .In this field Professor Anil K Gupta created a replicable model in developing grassroots level innovations to India and rest of the world.

Professor Anil K Gupta completed his master degree in Bio Chemical Genetics in 1974 from Haryana Agricultural University, Haryana. Later he earned his PhD in Management from Kurukshetra University (India) in 1986.



His unique work analyzing indigenous knowledge of farmers and pastoralists and building bridges to science based knowledge has led to the honor of being elected at a young age to India's National Academy of Agricultural Sciences and recognition through Pew Conservation Scholar Award of USD 150,000, 1993-96 from University Of Michigan.

He setup Grassroots Innovation Augmentation Network (GIAN) Society and Trust in 1997 to scale up grassroots innovations and convert this into viable products or services with appropriate benefit sharing arrangements, with a corpus Rs 50 Lacs with Gujarat Government collaboration .He helped to establish National Innovation Foundation (NIF) India in March 2000 with an initial corpus of Rs 20 Crores with a view to help India become an inventive and creative society and be a global leader in sustainable technologies by scouting and sustaining grassroots innovations.

He developed his interest in the areas of Expanding global, national and local space for grass roots inventors and innovators to ensure recognition, respect and reward for them, creating knowledge net work at different levels for augmenting grass roots green innovations and build a global value chain to get creativity.

Prof Gupta has designed and supporting Honey Bee Net work including 23000 innovations and examples of traditional knowledge from various parts of the country. His desire to develop a platform to recognize, respect and reward local innovators was the stimulus behind the creation of the Honey Bee network. The name Honey Bee was chosen to reflect how innovations are collected without making the innovators poorer and how connections are created between innovators. Honey Bee network has demonstrated that by building upon a resource in which poor people are rich in, that is their knowledge, a new paradigm of development can be unleashed.

He designed and implemented methods for farm and nonfarm sustainable technologies, energy saving, herbal aid to humans and special focus on women innovators. His award Rs US \$ 150,000 for Bio diversity conservation and Environment, has been used for strengthen Honey Bee Network. He brought news letter on indigenous innovations on the name of Honey Bee Network.

To help provide support structures for grass roots innovators and link formal and informal knowledge systems, SRISTI, a global initiative and an NGO, to network local innovators was established in 1993. It provides organizational support to the Honey Bee network in over 70 countries. He designed and established SRISTI (Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies and Institutions) with an aim to strengthen the capacity of grassroots level innovators and inventors those who engaged in conserving bio diversity .The key objectives of SRISTI are 1. Protect grassroots innovators and inventors intellectual property rights, 2.Experiment to add value to their knowledge, 3.Enrich their cultural and institutional basis of dealing with nature and modern science. He has been working as President to SRISTI .He set up National Micro Innovation Fund on 1st October 2003 with collaboration between SIDBI and NIF.

He worked as National Project Director for Global Environment Facility (GEF). He worked as adviser to Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institution from October 1985 to 1986 and Worked as chair person to Indian Institute of Management from 1993 to 1994.

Recognizing the necessity of NIFs, commonwealth secretariat requested to Prof. Anil K Gupta's help in establishing similar NIFs in all commonwealth countries .He has also been requested to review the performance of Common Wealth Council (CWC), UK. He has helped in organizing Common wealth gathering and arranged to showcase outstanding grass roots innovations at the exhibition in South Africa during 9th June to 15th June 2002.

He was honored many times for his services. Padma Shri award was given by the honorable President of India on the eve of Republic Day 26th January 2004 .He was nominated for world technology award for environment on 2001.

He Received Asian Innovation award in 2000 and Asian Young Inventors award in 2001. Professor Anil K Gupta presently has been working as Professor in Centre for Management in Agriculture, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmadabad.

The only one purpose in Gupta's life is to make India innovative and generate a new model of poverty alleviation relying on innovation based enterprises. He has been an inspirer and a ray of hope to many young budding innovators across India.

***Information till February 2009**

RUDSET Veerendra Heggade

Dr. D. Veerendra Heggade, Dharmadhikari of Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatha Kshetra of Karnataka, designed and established many programmes like Health, Education and Employment programmes. In every field the programmes evolved as models under his guidance. He is innovative in planning programmes and building institutions. Lakhs of people benefited from different types of these diverse activities.

Dr. Veerendra Heggade was born on 25th November 1948. He was the eldest son of the Sri Ratna Varma Heggade. Sri Ratna Varma Heggade was the Dharmadhikari of the Sri Dharmasthala Kshetra. After his father, the mantle of Heggadeship fell on the young shoulders of Veerendra Heggade at the age of 20, on October 1968. In three decades as Dharmadhikari, he has not only preserved the essence of the Kshetra, but also achieved a remarkable progress in his service to mankind.



Dr. Veerendra Heggade established Sri Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project (SKDRP) in 1982. This organization is working in 81 villages Belthangady District, covering 18000 families. The SKDRP has spent more than Rs. 10 Crore in development activities. This has generated more than Rs. 90 Crore besides creating rural employment and improving the living standards of the people. In 1995, SKDRP got FICCI award for its outstanding achievements.

In 1972 Veerendra Heggade organized “mass marriages” where all religions and castes were welcome, and hundreds of couples got married. The expenses for the wedding dress, mangala sutra and wedding feast for few members of couples’ guests were all paid by Kshetra. At present, yearly 500 couples are getting married in the Sri Dharmasthala Kshetra. Veerendra Heggade has contributed a lot in the health field also. A fully equipped mobile hospital was established by him to deal with emergencies and provide medical treatment to the rural people in the inaccessible interior places of Malnad area. A modern TB sanatorium was setup to give relief to TB patients. The ayurvedic hospital was built at Udipi and Hassan to provide ayurvedic medical services. A nature cure hospital was also built on the banks of River Nethravathi. One of the most modern allopathic eye treatment hospitals has been built at Mangalore. Dental hospital was also established serving persons with cleft lip and other orthodontic problems. In addition to the above curative services, he has also promoted the practice of yoga in about 250 schools to improve the fitness of the students.

In the field of education, he has established many new experimental and contemporary educational institutions. He established free hostels named Ratna Manasa, to provide free boarding and lodging for 8th, 9th, and 10th standard students. He set up Primary schools, 4 High schools, 12 Colleges and 12 other related institutions. Veerendra Heggade established Sri Manjunatheswara Cultural and Research Foundation to conduct research on religion, literature, arts and crafts. In this foundation, the ancient scriptures are being deciphered and being translated into modern Indian languages by scholars and experts. He established museum called Manjusha to protect and displays the arts of the past. He played an instrumental role in the revival of Yakshagana, the ethnic dance – unique cultural art form of the District of Dakshina Kanada. He has started a school for Yakshagana. He has revived ancient ethnic crafts like Navalgund carpets and Kasuti Embroidery.

Unemployment is the biggest challenge facing the country. Lakhs of youth are entering in market every year for jobs after completing their school /college education. There are no employment opportunities in the organized and unorganized sectors. The process of automation and mechanization accelerated this problem. In rural areas, even the agricultural sector is saturated, and unable to absorb the youth. Thus, there is a need for promoting self employment and entrepreneurial ventures among unemployed youth and women.

To solve this problem, Heggade established Rural Development and Self Employment Training Institute (RUDSETI) in 1982 at Ujire, a small village in Dakshina Kanada District, with financial support of Syndicate and Canara banks. RUDSETI now has 23 branches located all over India. RUDSETI works to transform rural youth to acquire productive identity through short duration interventions, and thus contribute to empowerment of youth. Need based training programmes are evolved taking into consideration the scope and sustainability of the activity by constantly scanning the environment. RUDSETI is working with a goal of alleviating unemployment in rural and semi urban parts of India. RUDSETI offers 50 short duration trainings, with durations ranging from 1 to 6 weeks. The trainings given are in 5 broad categories. I. First generation entrepreneurs II. Forest based entrepreneurs III. Rural development training programmes IV. Technology transfer programmes V. Human resource development programmes. RUDSETI trained 2 Lakh people in self employment since 1982. Among the trainees, 47% are women. More than 1 Lakh trained people started their own enterprises and 67,000 trained people accessed loans from banks amounting to Rs.263.77 Crore.

Considering the services of Dr. Veerendra Heggade to mankind, several organizations, universities and Governments honoured him with various awards. In April 1993 he was honoured with the title “Rajarshi” by Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, former President of India. For his social work Karnataka Government honoured him with “Rajyostava Award” in 1995. In 1994 he was honoured with “Indira Gandhi Priyadharsini Award”. He is also the recipient of Padma Bhushan award.

***Information till March 2009**

‘SAKTI’ Siva Ramakrishna

A school teacher turned cultural anthropologist turned social activist Dr Siva Ramakrishna has made a significant impact on the lives and livelihoods of the marginalized people in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Dr Siva Ramakrishna is leading an organization called SAKTI (Society for Action and Knowledge for Tribal Initiative) which is fighting for the tribal land rights in East and West Godavari districts of AP.

Siva Ramakrishna got his doctorate degree in 1982 on “Tribal Knowledge Systems”, from Osmania University. Before he started working with tribal communities, he worked as a school teacher for some time. He began his work with the tribal communities of East Godavari district while researching on his doctoral thesis. In the process of documenting and interpreting the tribal cultures through their music, dance and folklore, he was exposed to the plight of the tribal people and the exploitation of their resources by government officials, bureaucrats and big businesses. This exposure motivated him to start SAKTI in the year 1985. Soon Siva Ramakrishna started mobilizing the tribal communities to fight for their rights with the help of his colleagues. Later he married Sarada Devi who decided to join him in the work of SAKTI.



SAKTI has since been working to protect the forests and the tribal communities depending on the forests in the state of AP. Based at Hyderabad; SAKTI operates in the East and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh and in the area of Nallamala forest near Srisailem. Both areas have rich forest lands and are home to several tribal communities like the Koyas, the Kondareddies, the Valmikis and the Chenchus.

One of the first issues addressed by SAKTI was tribal land rights. A notion alien to the tribals, property rights, was introduced to them by the British. Early in the 20th century, the British administration assigned land to individual tribals. But over time, land was stolen from the tribals by conniving non-tribals and corrupt government officials. One of the biggest obstacles the tribals face when fighting for their rights is their lack of understanding of the judicial system and the administrative machinery. To overcome this barrier, SAKTI volunteers not only taught the tribals to read and interpret land records but also trained them to handle legal issues themselves. Out of 26 people trained from a dozen villages, 15 learned skills to read village land maps, adangal, field measurement book, and Resurvey Register and can locate the targeted plot in the field.

SAKTI in collaboration with ITDA had taken up cashew plantations in the ‘unreserved’ lands in the year 1985. Later the Revenue department issued titles to the people cultivating the unreserved lands. SAKTI is promoting renewable energy technologies in the tribal areas and now planning to implement a micro-hydel power generation project to provide electricity to the remote tribal villages.

Siva Ramakrishna is actively involved in public litigation cases against development projects that threaten the environment and the survival of the tribal people. Through SAKTI he actually forced the government to implement the instructions of Chief Secretary to cancel the mining leases to non-tribals in scheduled areas. Siva Ramakrishna also has been involved in various developmental activities in tribal as well as non-tribal areas. He provided training to the tribals in income generation activities like making cane and bamboo furniture.

In the non-tribal arena, Siva Ramakrishna is assisting the weavers’ community in Amalapuram area in adopting their skills to suit the new market requirements and he is also actively seeking to market the woven products after a devastating cyclone that struck AP coast in 1996. All of these activities he does together with SAKTI either directly or indirectly.

Siva Ramakrishna is well-known and much respected in administrative and activist circles. He is intelligent and hard working. Under his dynamic leadership SAKTI won a public litigation case against the Godavari Plywood factory, an industry that was threatening the livelihood of the tribal people by cutting mango and jackfruit trees in the forests. And recently, SAKTI also won a case against the construction of Bhupatipalem reservoir in the East Godavari district. The reservoir project, if implemented, would submerge 6 tribal villages and thousands of acres of fertile forest land that provides livelihood for thousands of tribal population.

Dr. Siva Ramakrishna was a member of the Regional committee of CAPART, Hyderabad, (Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India) from 1999 to 2002. He is also a member of Steering Committee of the UNDP Project on “People’s Empowerment through Panchayat Raj in Schedule V Areas and Studies on Laws affecting the Poor” convened by NIRD (National Institute of Rural Development). He is also a Member of State Board of Wildlife. Together with Biksham Gujja, S. Ramakrishna and Vinod Goud, he edited a book that attracted the attention of both common man and intellectuals/activities, titled “Perspectives on Polavaram – A Major Irrigation Project of Godavari”. This book is giving contribution to the controversial debate about Polavaram mega irrigation project that is located in Godavari delta, which is a part of the major irrigation expansion program of the Government of AP, which includes 26 projects with an outlay of Rs. 46,000 crores (\$10 billion).

Dr. Siva Ramakrishna along with SAKTI has been contributing significantly for the betterment of the marginalized people by educating and empowering them on various issues and making them fight for their rights and entitlements. SAKTI’s way of protecting the rights and entitlements of indigenous people and empowering them can serve as a model to many organizations and individuals working for the cause of tribal communities and their development.

***Information till April 2009**

SAGARI R. RAMDAS

A young veterinarian is introducing controlled, environmentally sustainable approaches to animal husbandry, a critical dimension of the rural fabric where, until now, advances in development practice have lagged.

Sagari R Ramdas trained as a veterinarian (1986) and has a Masters in Animal Breeding and Genetics (1991), from the University of California, Davis, USA. She has worked with rural and adivasi communities as a field veterinarian, trainer and researcher on livestock and peoples livelihoods. With Nitya Ghotge in 1992, she founded the organization named ANTHRA that has two operating offices in Hyderabad and Pune. For this organization, she is the Vice President of ANTHRA and Director of ANTHRA Hyderabad.



ANTHRA is an organization of women veterinary scientists working primarily on issues of livestock development in the wider context of sustainable natural resource use. Working mainly, with small and marginal farmers-dalits, adivasis, pastoralists, landless groups and especially with women

from these marginalized communities, ANTHRA has a team comprising of experts from the field of veterinary sciences, sociology, medicine, environmental sciences and communication. ANTHRA's focus areas are livestock production and farming systems, crops and fodder varieties, livestock and plant genetic resources, medicinal plants and health care traditions, land and water use and the protection of indigenous knowledge related to these. The initial aim of the organization was to search for alternative systems for delivering livestock health and management practices to poor people, especially women in rural areas. Today, ANTHRA is a resource centre offering training, research and advocacy initiatives in the areas of livestock, biodiversity and people's livelihood.

Sagari R Ramdas is aware about the current condition where for want of the application of modern development theory and technology to animal husbandry, terrible human and environmental damage has taken place. Shifting land use and cropping patterns, excess animals, and non-sustainable grazing patterns have led to declining fodder and forest yields and soil erosion. Animal disease, death, and low productivity have also taken an enormous toll on the rural economy and the nutritional level of its people. The self focused nature of the government's animal husbandry and veterinary bureaucracies has made them deaf to the views and knowledge of those who own and care for animals at the village level. Nor are these organizations are comfortable in reaching out for collaboration. In Sagari's own words, "the highly centralized animal health care system has denied the existence of a local knowledge base, has failed to meet the needs of the producers, especially the poor, landless, and marginal farmers. As a result, local people have become more dependent on external forces for the management and care of their livestock."

By undertaking village-level data gathering and analysis, she and her team trains village animal caretakers in basic veterinary skills. Then she develops the intervention models: seeking creative solutions to problems in the four areas of health, feeding, breeding, and management. Sagari's ultimate goal is to change the outmoded bureaucratic pattern of the animal husbandry field rationally. To speed that day she plans to demonstrate her approach in two different states, moving quickly in each by working through two well-established, quality private area development organizations. She is also positioning herself within the scientific, nonprofit, and government communities so that she will have direct and influential access to those who give input to and develop livestock policies.

She has co-coordinated research on the gender, caste and class dynamics of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Livestock Production and her work includes community action-research, training and policy research on livestock production in dry land agriculture. She has significant publications on livestock production in the larger framework of people's rights to food sovereignty. She also ran a project of Human Rights for India's Dalit Community, Empowering Dalit communities through strengthening livestock as a livelihood base that were includes Dalit men and women from 3 districts of Andhra Pradesh & Maharashtra.

She was one of the signatories of Statement of Solidarity with Southern African nations over GM (Genetic Modification) food and crops on World Summit on Sustainable Development at Johannesburg, 26 Aug – 4 Sept 2002. She is also a member of advisory group of ELDev (Endogenous Livestocks Development Network) together with her partner in ANTHRA Nitya Ghotge. Again with Nitya Ghotge, she contributed livestock and livelihood pages for the book titled Conservation and Sustainable Use of Agricultural Biodiversity-A Sourcebook that was published by CIP-UPWARD (International Potato Center – Users Perspectives with Agricultural Research and Development) in collaboration with GTZ (German Technical Cooperation), IDRC (International Development Research Center) of Canada, IPGRI (International Plant Genetic Resource Institute) and SEARICE (Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment) in 2003.

Beside her activity with ANTRHA, Sagari R Ramdas is also one of Ashoka Fellows that was elected on 2003 to joined ASHOKA. Ashoka Fellows are leading social entrepreneurs who are recognized to have innovative solutions to social problems and the potential to change patterns across society.

Managing and demonstrating how India can do a far better job at the India's livestock sector indently of rural development is the enormous task. Sagari R Ramdas takes this responsibility and she did demonstrate by her actions on building a strong foundation of local knowledge and creating interactive exchange of accurate knowledge of the facts between local residents and science professionals and policy makers.

***Information till May 2009**

Rural Journalist Palagummi Sainath

Sainath was born in 1957 from a distinguished family in Andhra Pradesh. He is the grandson of former President of India, V. V. Giri and was educated by the Jesuits in Madras at Loyola College. His preoccupation with social problems and commitment to a political perspective began when he was a student in college. He is a graduate of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi where he was part of an activist student population. After receiving a Master's degree in history, he launched his career as a journalist at the United News of India in 1980 where he received the news agency's highest individual award. He then worked for the Blitz, then a major South Asian weekly in Mumbai with a circulation of 600,000, first as foreign affairs editor and then as deputy editor, which he continued for ten years.

The International Monetary Fund-led economic reforms launched in 1991 by Manmohan Singh constituted a watershed in India's economic history and in Sainath's journalistic career. He felt that the media's attention was moving from "news" to "entertainment" and consumerism and lifestyles of the urban elite gained prominence in the newspapers which rarely carried news of the reality of poverty in India. "I felt that if the Indian press was covering the top 5 per cent, I should cover the bottom 5 per cent", says Sainath.



He quit Blitz and in 1993 applied for a Times of India fellowship. At the fellowship's interview he spoke of his plans to report from rural India. When an editor asked him, "Suppose I tell you my readers aren't interested in this stuff", Sainath riposted, "When did you last meet your readers to make any such claims on their behalf?" He got the fellowship and took to the back roads in the ten poorest districts of five states. It meant covering close to 100,000 km across India using 16 forms of transportation, including walking 5,000km on foot. He credits two sympathetic editors at the Times with much of his success in getting the articles published in their present form; since it is one among the very newspapers that has been accused of shifting the onus from page one to page three. The paper ran 84 reports by Sainath across 18 months, many of them subsequently reprinted in his book, 'Everybody Loves A Good Drought'. For more than two years, the book remained No.1 amongst non-fiction bestsellers on diverse lists across the country. Eventually, it entered the ranks of Penguin India's all-time best sellers. It is considered the handbook for NGO activists, with its direct reporting style and sharp focus on social and economic cleavages in society. Typically Sainath, he gave all the royalties from this huge best-seller to fund prizes for young rural journalists.

His bestselling book, 'Everybody Loves a Good Drought', helped focus public attention on the condition of India's rural poor, increasing public awareness and support. In the last decade, he has spent on average threefourths of the year with village people, reporting extensively on agrarian crises due to the neo-liberal policies like globalization, privatization and related government policies and the shift in its priorities, on the lack of sensitivity and efficiency by the government and the bureaucracy and on farmer suicides in Wayanad, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra and on the plight of dalits, writing articles for various newspapers.

Sainath is currently the rural affairs editor of The Hindu and contributes his column to India Together. One of his more recent projects, on dalits, for The Hindu, is nearly complete, and he is planning a book based on this work. This project covers a gigantic area across 15 states in India. He has already covered 150,000 km and has five more states to go. When the newspapers were unwilling to fund beyond a point, Sainath spent from his own resources, his savings, his provident fund, his gratuity – avoiding corporate sponsors. His current project is on the agrarian crisis nationwide, particularly those regions where its effects are most severe. He has filed over 100 reports on the agrarian crisis in recent years. He has also himself taken all the photographs that go with those reports. The pictures are documenting the families of the suicide victims makes up the only photo record of its kind in existence.

Sainath accepted over 30 other national and international journalism awards and fellowships in 26 years as a journalist, including the Ramon Magsaysay journalism award which he accepted in 2007 in the category of Journalism, Literature and Creative Communication Arts, the European Commission's Natali Prize in 1994 and the Boerma Journalism Prize from the UN FAO in 2001 (along with CNN International's Jim Clancy), the Amnesty International global award for human rights journalism in 2000, the PUCL Human Rights Journalism Award, and the B.D. Goenka award for excellence in journalism in 2000. In June 2006 Sainath won the Judges' prize (newspaper category) in the 2005 Harry Chapin Media Awards. In 1984 he was a Distinguished International Scholar at the University of Western Ontario and in 1988 at Moscow University. He has participated in many international initiatives on communications such as the second and third round table on Global Communications sponsored by the UNESCO (1990 and 1991) and in the UNHCR sponsored World Information Campaign on Human Rights (1991). He was conferred with the prestigious Raja- Lakshmi Award in the year 1993 from Sri Raja-Lakshmi Foundation, Chennai.

Mr. Sainath's contribution to journalism is singular in post- Independent India. No one before had took the cause of rural India with such passion and mainstreamed reporting. Through his work on the India's social problems, Sainath changed the nature of the development debate in his own country and across the world.

***Information till June 2009**

Dr + Social Worker: Sudarshan

Dr Hanumappa Sudarshan is a renowned doctor known for his excellent service to mankind particularly the elusive tribal communities. Dr. Sudarshan made his profession as a medium for social work. Born in Yemalur on the outskirts of the city of Bengaluru on 30 December 1950, Sudarshan became a medical doctor by qualification and dedicated his life to social development in India. Initially, his focus was the upliftment and welfare of tribal people of Chamarajanagar district of Karnataka.

Dr Sudarshan began his medical practice from the health institution of Ramakrishna Mission. Through this institution he traveled across several places. With his strong will to provide medical help to the rural and tribal communities, he practiced medicine in the Himalayas, at Belur Math in West Bengal and also other remote areas. In 1980 he established Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra (VGKK). The main focus of the Kendra is to offer progressive development in the sector of health, education as well as livelihood security and biodiversity conservation to the tribes of Chamarajanagar and Mysore district of Karnataka.



VGKK services today crossed the boundaries of Karnataka state and spread across the country. The Kendra covers the tribes of Tamil Nadu, Arunachal Pradesh and Andaman & Nicobar Islands through its 20,000 volunteers. The organization has always had a tribal youth as its President. Presently, Jadeya Gowda one of the first few children taught by Dr. Sudarshan is the President. He went on to do a graduation and post-graduation in agriculture and is presently doing his PhD at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore.

VGKK has been successfully carrying out several programs in the tribal areas in education, health, community organization, revitalization of traditional medicines, biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture, rehabilitation of displaced tribals, low cost housing, social forestry, tribal cooperatives and promotion of appropriate technology. VGKK runs school for 450 students belonging to tribal communities of BR Hills. The curriculum of the school mainly concentrates on environmental issues, tribal values and culture along with other subjects. They also conduct vocational trainings through which 16 type of craft works are being taught. As a result of the efforts of VGKK, about 60% of the Soliga tribe now get a minimum of 300 days of employment per year from the Forest Department of Karnataka and other agencies. VGKK also has a system of cooperatives which employ the tribals directly and it has also made an effort towards sustainable extraction of non-timber products and creation of tribal enterprises to process them.

In 1986, Dr Sudarshan started Karuna Trust in Yelandur. Karuna Trust is an organization involved with integrated rural development and is affiliated to VGKK. The prevalence of leprosy in Yelandur Taluk of Chamarajanagar district was the motivation behind starting the trust. Other focus areas of this trust are education and livelihood improvement. Karuna Trust runs 25 Primary Health Care (PHC) Centers in all the districts of Karnataka and 9 PHC's in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. The flagship intervention of the Organization is to promote Public Private Partnership with NGOs on a non-profit basis to achieve primary health care. As a part of India Literacy Project, Karuna Trust has created the first integrated model of education in the state providing access to anganwadis and schools to all children in the age group 0-14. As acknowledged by the Block Education Officer, the Yelandur block has only 105 children out-of-school.

Dr Sudarshan has held many positions of significance in his career, prominent among them being the chair of the Task Force on Health and Family Welfare organised by Government of Karnataka, the Task Force on Public Private Partnership organised by National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) of Government of India and Institute of Health management & Research (IHMR), Bangalore. He was also a member of Working Group 6 on Macroeconomics & Health organised by the World Health Organisation and was also a Steering Group member of the Planning Commission on the Empowerment of Scheduled Tribes in India's 11th Five Year Plan. He has also been the Vigilance Director for the Karnataka Lokayukta, an ombudsman organization. During his tenure, he made regular visits and raids to several government departments and earned critical acclaim for this.

In the year 1994, Dr. Sudarshan was felicitated with the Right Livelihood Award, for showing how tribal culture can contribute to a process that secures the basic rights and fundamental needs of indigenous people and conserves their environment. Other awards include the Padma Shri Award (2000) and the Rajyotsava State Award for social work (1984), given by the Government of Karnataka. He is also an Ashoka Fellow.

Dr. Sudarshan's work has been acknowledged by none other than the former President Dr. A P J A Kalam, who also visited the area in October 2006. The following excerpt from Dr. Kalam's address at the residential tribal school of Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences at Bhubaneswar on 29th Nov 2006, speaks for itself. "Recently, I visited BR Hills in Karnataka and I found substantial new developments have taken place in this area. I can see a "New Tribal Hospital" and education environment, and that the earning capacity of the tribal citizens has been increased with the technology resource centre as a base. Previously, they were selling honey at Rs. 6 a kg., whereas now they are selling it at Rs. 60 per kg. In the rural complex, solar lamps, health insurance, and quality schools are available. Dr. H. Sudarshan is an inspiring architect of this societal transformation."

***Information till July 2009**

Marketing Expert K.P. Rao

While listing important persons who have contributed significantly towards marketing of NTFP and agricultural produce, K.P.Rao's name will take an important place. Mr Rao has contributed his knowledge of the market and marketing skills in tilting the profit margin towards the tribal and farmers.

Katikaneni Prabhakara Rao was born to Shri. Rangarao and Smt Dhamayanthi Devi, on 5th December 1941, at Velamaguda village, Nalgonda district. He had his schooling till graduation at Nalgonda itself and pursued LLB at Hyderabad. As a law student he happened to meet, Shri Jalagam Vengal Rao, then chairman of State Panchayath raj parishath who later became Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh who inspired him to work on panchayat Parishath and joined in January 1963. He received special training on Panchayath raj at Central Institute for Training and Research in Panchayath raj, New Delhi under All India Panchayat Parishad in 1964. He was one among the 22 trainees selected from 12 states. He was inspired by speeches of Babu Jagjeevanram and JP Narayan. This motivated him to work for the weaker sections of the society at a very young age of 24. In a short time he was selected as instructor (in the rank of BDO) to train the Panchayath raj functionaries. In recognition of his sincerity, hard work and commitment, he was posted as instructor at Panchayath raj training centre at Bodhan,



Nizamabad District covering Karimnagar and Adilabad districts where he has trained over 5000 panchayath raj functionaries along with other two team members. He also worked as Superintendent and Business Manager at Hyderabad from 1966 to 1976. He has coordinated 3 member committee constituted by government of Andhra Pradesh headed by Shri N. Yathi Rajarao MLA, Chairman Panchayat parishat and Prof Muthalib and Dr. S.P Rangarao, Public Administration Department, Osmania University to study the problems of educational institutions under panchayath raj bodies in eight districts. While continuing service he did MA (Public Administration) and Post Graduation Diploma in Personal Management, Industrial relations and Labour welfare and dispensed with idea practicing law and decided to work for the poor.

In the year 1976, he joined in Girijan Cooperative Corporation as a Divisional Manager at Adilabad and served in this tribal district for seven years working for the welfare of the tribal people particularly in marketing of the tribal produce. Later he worked in various other positions at GCC at various places. During 13 years of service in GCC he extensively travelled covering all most all the tribal blocks of the state in all ITDA areas for propagation and proper collection and marketing of tribal produce and prompt supply of essential commodities in the remote, inertial and inaccessible tribal areas. With his intensive work poor tribal people received enhanced prices for their produce, improved their knowledgebase resulting maximum tapping of available potential of various forest products in the tribal districts.

Considering Rao's valuable contribution and service in GCC he was selected as General Manager, Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) under Ministry of Welfare, Government of India in 1988. From 1988 to December 2000 he held different positions such as General Manager, Delhi, General Manager-Zonal Manager, South zone (Hyderabad), General Manager-Zonal Manager east and north east zone at Calcutta covering West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Manipur and Mizoram, Senior General Manager, Calcutta, Delhi, executive director, Delhi, and Additional Managing Director at Delhi.

During this period Rao extensively travelled entire country particularly covering the tribal populated states and integrated marketing of NTFPs between TRIFED and all the tribal development corporations and forest corporations of the country. During this period there was a marked improvement in collection of forest produce in different states and Gumkaraya, Niger seeds, Lac exports have increased tremendously.

Rao was a Director on the boards of MECOFED Meghalaya, GCC Vizag, Asian Gums and Chemicals Limited, Hyderabad. He has also served as Chairman, Neem Development Committee constituted by ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. He was one of the members in the 5 members committee constituted by Ministry of Welfare on Development of Non Timber Forest Produce. From 1994 to 1996, Rao has closely monitored establishment of Grain banks in the remote, interior and inaccessible areas of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra states which is first of its kind under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.

After superannuation at 60, because of his rich experience, he has been selected as State Project Advisor (Marketing) of Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty, AP. He has personally initiated and put efforts to identify most important NTFP item i.e. Lac collected from Plant called "Butia Monosperma" which was not tapped till now in Andhra Pradesh. In his 47 years of long service he visited many countries for business promotions and trade negotiations. Rao had received Gold Medal from Government of Karnataka, AIHRA award from Ambassador, Jordan and Rastriya Vikas Siromany award from Delhi Telugu Academy, Silver Jubilee award of Delhi Telugu Sangam.

Rao feels that God has given this opportunity to work for the poorest of the poor in the society which is very much satisfying in his long 47 years of service. He says he is very much thankful for the opportunity to work in great projects like Indira Kranthi Patham and to work with/under the guidance of great tribal and rural development specialists in the country in his long service.

***Information till August 2009**

Ramanjaneyulu of Sustainable Agriculture

Around six lakh farmers from 1800 villages have been benefited from the alternative agricultural cultivation model developed and promoted by Dr. GV Ramanjaneyulu. He was pained to see that the technology of using pesticides for cultivation had many adverse effects on the farmers as well as the consumers. It is believed that the usage of pesticides creates a kind of dependency where farmers feel it is necessary to use pesticides for cultivation forcing farmers to continue spending on them whether they can afford it or not.

Over a period of time pesticides start failing to protect the crops resulting in crop failure worsening the economic condition of the farmers. The pesticides also settle in the food grains as residue, which are consumed by the ignorant consumers. This state of affairs bothered Dr G V Ramanjaneyulu who pursued research and experimentation to develop an alternative method of cultivation which doesn't require usage of pesticides. The model is popularly known as Non pesticide management (NPM) method of cultivation.



Born in Dhone, Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh in 1967, Ramanjaneyulu pursued his education in Agriculture at both graduation and post graduation. He also did PhD in agriculture at IARI, New Delhi. Initially he wanted to join civil services, he felt it is more meaningful to create systems useful for the poor people than just governing them. He believes that structural changes are necessary for having long lasting impact that would benefit more people. This mean changes at all levels of the system from policy to field level implementation.

Ramanjaneyulu started his career at Agricultural Research Service Centre, Hyderabad as a scientist. During this period he developed contacts with other organizations working in this field like DDS, CWS and other farmer's organizations. In 1997, he organized many meetings and made presentations on harmful effects of using BT seed varieties. In this context he wrote a book titled "terminator logic".

Year 1997 -98, which saw increased number of farmers suicides, propelled Ramanjaneyulu and his team to take up extensive traveling in the Warangal and Karimnagar districts to understand the situation. They figured out that the culprit behind the suicides was not credit alone but defunct technology of using pesticides and practicing un-organic methods of cultivation. Back from the field study, he wrote his experiences in the book titled "The Sad Story of Cotton Farmer".

In 2004, Ramanjaneyulu and his friends registered Centre for Sustainable Agriculture (CSA) as a wing of Centre for World Solidarity. The aim of the organization is to work on technology and policy research with a vision to make agriculture productive, ecologically sensitive and capable of preserving the social fabric of rural communities. CSA works with farmers by amalgamating modern science with the skills and ingenuity of local people and communities to conserve their resources and their rights.

To demonstrate Non Pesticide Management (NPM) as an alternative cultivation model, they under took a project in partnership with SECURE, an NGO and selected Pudukula village in Khammam district. The program was the first massive effort to wean people from pesticides and to promote non-chemical, eco-friendly, local-resource-based approaches to farming. The results of the initial stages were encouraging. They motivated and convinced farmers to adopt NPM model. They were given training, technological and financial support to implement the model. As an outcome the expenditure of the cultivation was reduced by 50% and the productivity was good (didn't incur loss).

At the same time government had constituted a commission headed by Jayathi Ghosh to study the agrarian crisis. Ramanjaneyulu met the commission and explained the alternate model developed by them and requested them to adopt it. The commission as well as the state minister for agriculture visited the model and were convinced by the model developed. The AP government with technical support from CSA decided to implement the model through the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty / IKP project. The implementation of the project was scaled up to eleven districts in 2004. 450 villages, 25,000 acres of land was covered under this program. In 2007 and 08 it was expanded to 1,800 villages covering 7 lakh acres benefiting six lakh farmers.

The organization in the leadership of Dr. GV Ramanjaneyulu has developed extensive documentation on the issue, prepared training modules and has also created network that could support the process. They also provide technical support to NGOs, farmer organisations. They have been advocating with the state for farmer friendly policies.

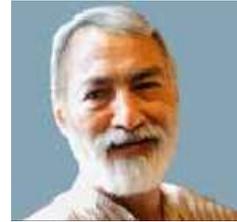
Ramanjaneyulu and his team have also formed two important cooperatives. Producer's cooperative to interface with the market, to ensure that farmers are not cheated and get the maximum benefit for their produce. Similarly a consumer cooperative has been formed to increase awareness about organic products and harms of consuming food items produced using pesticides. During previous elections they put together farmers manifesto and presented it to the political parties to accept their agenda. They have also designed website that provides updated information on the alternatives in the farming sector and NPM. Ramanjaneyulu has written for many local and national journals and has made presentations at many international forums especially in the European Union and South Asian countries. He was also responsible in initiating "Science for People Forum" along with his colleagues. Very few people knew about NPM ten years ago, but now it is a very popular method adopted by many farmers. Efforts of Dr G Ramanjaneyulu and his team are evident behind such a positive change.

***Information till September 2009**

Professionalizing Development - Deep Joshi

Deep Joshi is one of the Indian social workers, NGO activists who worked for bringing professionalism in development sector. He co-founded a non-profit organization, Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN) of which he is the executive director and served for the development of rural communities.

Deep Joshi was born in 1947 in village Puriyag, a remote area of Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand in the Himalayas to Harikrishan Joshi, a farmer and was one of the seven children. He received his early education at the local primary school, and later he took his Engineering Degree in Mechanical branch from Motilal Nehru National Institute of technology, Allahabad in 1968. He worked as a lecturer at the same institute for some years. In 1971, the Union government announced a scholarship for overseas studies, which Joshi stumbled across and decided to apply. He completed his Masters Engineering Degree from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, USA and MBA from Sloan School, Boston, USA.



When Deep Joshi came back to India, he was not entirely sure what to do with his education. In 1977, he joined the Systems Research Institute in Pune where he worked for about 2 years as Senior Systems Analyst. Later he joined Ford Foundation as programme officer where he was sent to rural Maharashtra on his first project. There he met the US trained medical doctors, Rajnikant and Mabelle Arole, The Aroles, with their excellent qualifications and their zeal for village work, were the first shining examples that Joshi encountered of professionals in development. The sight of a doctor women sitting on floor with poor people was unusual for him and that is where the idea came into his mind, that this is what we need for our society. Why it is not that a doctor does not work with village men and women and help them improve their health systems? Why can't an engineer work in a village to help them with improved technology? With these questions in mind Joshi concluded that if only more people equipped with both knowledge and empathy decided to work in the villages, India's rural society would be transformed.

Despite India's remarkable economic boom in recent years, poverty remains urgent and widespread in this vast country. 42% of India's population (Roughly 400 million people) still lives below the global poverty line. At the frontlines in addressing this problem is a huge civil society movement of a million non-government organizations or NGOs. Yet, many of these organizations are small or ineffective. It is in the context of these challenges that Deep Joshi evolved his development work.

In 1983, Deep Joshi co-founded a non-profit organization, Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN), which recruits university-educated youth from campuses across India and trains them for grass roots work. PRADAN is established because Joshi saw that NGOs were "bleeding hearts but little more", and because he saw their crying need for top-tier professionals, or for graduates from the IIT, IIMS. Joshi felt, "Civil society needs to have both head and heart. If all of us have bleeding hearts it would not work. If we only have heads, then you are going to dictate solutions which do not touch the human chord."

Pradana started work in seven poor states including Jharkhand in erstwhile Bihar, promoting self-help groups, developing locally suitable economic activities and introducing systems to improve the livelihood of the rural poor. The organization concentrated on Jharkhand's Naxalite zones of Lohardaga, Gumla and Chaibasa, and in Bankura and Purulia in neighbouring

Working with a team of IIT and IIM graduates, Joshi says nowadays talented youth considered development work intellectually inferior to science, industry or diplomacy. So, he wants to prove that it is both a challenging and a noble choice. PRADAN recruit top professionals to enhance agricultural productivity and promote rural livelihood through animal husbandry, dairy farming and sericulture. The result is a group i.e. active in seven states, helps 70,000 families support themselves, supervises over 100 crore rupees worth of newly-created economic activity, and keeps on growing.

Under the guidance of Joshi, PRADAN staff empowers village groups with technical, project implementation, and networking skills that increase both their income generating capabilities and their actual family income. Its staff, combining their professional expertise with local knowledge also train villagers as Para-veterinarians, accountants, and technicians who support their fellow villagers in building and sustaining collective livelihood projects. PRADAN is not founder centric. It is a decentralized, collegial body that has developed institutional space for second-generation leaders. Joshi is himself an exemplar of its strength and character as a professional organization, retiring at the policy-prescribed age despite the wish of his colleagues for him to stay on. Still he remains deeply committed to PRADAN, now working purely as an advisor to the Organization.

He held many other positions such as advisor to the Government of India on poverty alleviation strategies and also served as a member of Working Group on Rain fed Areas for the Eleventh Five Year Planning Commission, Government of India. In the year 2006, he received the Harmony Silver Award for his contributions to

Deep Joshi was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay award for Community Leadership for the year 2009 for his vision and leadership in bringing professionalism to NGO movement in India by effectively combining 'head' and 'heart' in the transformative work of rural development.

***Information till October 2009**

Strengthening Self Help Groups-CS Reddy

Tupalli Chandrasekhara Reddy popularly known as CS Reddy is a well known development worker in Andhra Pradesh especially for his contribution in strengthening Self Help Groups and SHG federations. He is also synonymous with Andhra Pradesh Mahila Abhivrudhi Society, widely known as APMAS, an institution founded by him. He was born into an agricultural family of Kalikiri village in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh and grew up to study Statistics and Operations (M.Sc) from S.V. University, Tirupathi and a Ph d in the same subject from Central University, Hyderabad in 1988.

In his twenty years of service as a development worker, CS Reddy has worked with two prominent organizations CARE INDIA and APMAS. His first job was that of a lecturer of Statistics and Operations at Central University when he was pursuing Ph d. In 1989, he joined CARE INDIA as national level evaluation and monitoring officer and has held many important positions like Regional Manager of 3 states in projects on nutrition and health and later appointed as CARE INDIA Andhra Pradesh' s State Director to work in partnership with 30- 40 NGOs'. In 2001, July Mr. Reddy started Andhra Pradesh Mahila Abhivrudhi Society or APMAS as it is popularly known as, is a familiar institution working on sustainability of the Self Help Groups (SHGs). It stands as an ideal for several national level institutions working towards formation and strengthening of SHGs. Behind this recognition and success is tremendous effort, struggle and decades of continuous work by Mr. C S. Reddy.



Reddy's work of supervising activities of CARE INDIA took him to many villages and gave an opportunity to see the life of poor people from close quarters. This interested him to work for the people in the villages. He was responsible for giving technical and managerial support to the project, and design policies, systems and supervisory methods for health and nutrition programme. He has played important role in designing big programmes like Credit And Savings for Hold Enterprise (CASHE) and Sustainable Tribal Empowerment Programme (STEP) and also in getting approval for these projects from the European Commission. He has also played crucial role in establishing organizations and developing various training plans and participatory training methodologies to implement these programs. During his work he has also partnered with Governments and has undertaken evaluation of many health projects. He has also developed tools and methods of evaluation and collecting and analyzing

. CS Reddy is one of the well know evaluators of the projects in the country. While supervising execution of various projects and conducting evaluations he observed that, organizations are concentrating only on giving aid to the people, but are not doing much in making people self reliant. He found that people's organizations are weak and are dependent on the staff of NGOs and others in their day to day functioning. But people's organization must be strong and self sustainable in order to eradicate poverty. In response to this condition in the poor communities he decided to form an organization to enhance and develop the people's organizations which resulted in the formation of Andhra Pradesh Mahila Abhivrudhi Society (APMAS).

Under the leadership of CS Reddy, today APMAS is a state level technical institution which builds capacities of self micro finance institutions and provides with skills of setting up systems and procedures that would enable efficient utilization of resources. Till date APMAS has trained around 80,000 people, conducted evaluation of 434 samakhya and rated them on their performance which is essential to attract financial resources as well as to upgrade functioning. It has conducted 30 research studies and has organized over 15 state and national level conferences on sustainability of self micro finance institutions. The organization is also partnering with poverty reduction programs like Society for Poverty Reduction (SERP) in 8 districts and Mission for Poverty Elimination in Municipal Areas (MEPMA) in Guduwada, Gunthakal and L B Nagar of Greater Hyderabad Municipality. They are also implementing this project in other states like Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. In all these places Samakhya working under the leadership of APMAS have become role models for other samakhya to follow.

Realizing the need for synergy between Government and NGOs for effective implementation of any project, CS Reddy has initiated a state level GO-NGO network and a national level network of SHG federations. He has conducted several training programmes for organizations like MYRADA and IRMA and was also part of the Indian policy delegation which went to Germany to study the self reliance concepts in the co-operative system. He has also lead a team to Thailand during Tsunami for rehabilitation work. He has also helped in development of micro finance institutors in other countries like Thailand and African countries. On the request of DFID and World Bank, he had worked as a consultant with them on sustainability and development of micro finance

CS Reddy strongly believes that poor people can develop only when they are collectivized and guided to utilize the resources efficiently. In today's scenario where people's organizations are facing lot of management challenges in sustaining interest of its members, efficiently managing financial and human resources and taking up tough decisions, contributions of Mr Reddy in designing efficient and sustainable management systems is crucial. Even todate he continues working to spread his dream of building many more self managed and self sustained poor people's organizations tirelessly.

***Information till November 2009**

Rajendra Singh- 'The Water Man of India'

Rajendra Singh, the water man of India, is leading a successful effort of greening Alwar district, a drought-prone region of Rajasthan, India by rediscovering the local knowhow for building check dams ("johad") and combining it with strong principles of local participatory management. He inspired a holistic transformation of rural life in over 1000 villages: from making agriculture viable again, reversing migration to cities, re-foresting the Aravali hill slopes and rejuvenating seasonal rivulets into perennial rivers.

Rajendra Singh was born on 6th August, 1959 in Rajasthan. He is a post graduate with an M.A in Hindi from Allahabad University and was trained as Ayurvedic physician from Rishikul Ayurvedic Mahavidyalaya. After finishing his studies, he joined as a National Service Volunteer at Jaipur under the youth education program of the Ministry of Education, Government of India and worked in it till 1984. Later he took up a career as a teacher in the villages of Rajasthan for some time where he observed the plight of villagers because of lack of water.



After this Rajendra Singh left his job and committed himself to rural development. With four companions he went to a desolate village in Alwar district in Rajasthan and started organizing the community in the villages of Alwar by establishing an organization named Tarun Bharat Singh (TBS). Upon the advice of a local village elder, Rajendra Singh and his friends began the process of repairing and deepening old Johads (Johad is a concave structure which collects and stores water throughout the year. It is used for drinking purposes by humans and cattle). Initially the residents of Bhanota-Kolyala village which is in the Aravali mountain ranges, with the help of the TBS, constructed a johad at the source of the Aravali river which had dried up completely by that time. Soon villages around the catchment area and along the dry river constructed tiny earthen dams. Even after constructing some Johads in and around the Sariska Tiger Reserve which is located in the same Aravali mountain ranges, the water level did not go up. Rajendra Singh observed that this happened because of mining in the Aravali mountain ranges as the water collected in the pits left unfilled by the miners after their operations. He also observed that the mining operations in the area resulted in dangerous floods when ever there were monsoon rains. Overwhelmed by these calamities, villagers abandoned their villages and men shifted to the cities for work. Women carried frail crops from dry grounds and walked several kilometers a day to find water.

With a view to address these issues and fulfill the needs of the Rajasthan villagers Rajendra Singh and his companions took up the issue and filed a public interest petition which eventually led to the closure of 470 mines operating within the eco fragile Aravali ranges and periphery of the Sariska sanctuary. Soon the Ministry of Environment and Forests banned the mining in the Aravali hill system. In the mean time the villagers in that region went on constructing the johads and other water harvesting structures with the help of Rajendra Singh and TBS. When the number of dams reached 375, the river began to flow. The villagers still consider it as a miracle. The workers who became jobless because of closure of mines were rehabilitated through water and forest conservation activities and rural development like animal husbandary, agriculture and through different types of employment generation activities initiated by TBS.

Guided by Gandhi's teachings of local autonomy and self-reliance, Singh has introduced community led institutions to each village, i.e. Gram Sabhas, Mahila Banks, RiverParliament etc. He initiated an awareness campaign for Gram Swawlamban under which the activities like Soil conservation, improved seeds, collection of herbal medicine and Shramdan were undertaken. The residents of the region went on to constitute a parliament of their own. Arvari Sansad, is a representative body of 72 villages in the areas served by the river. The Arvari parliament has framed 11 major rules to fix the cropping pattern and water use. The rules permit only landless farmers to draw water directly from the river and ban the cultivation of sugarcane and the raising of buffaloes as these activities would require relatively large amounts of water. In principle with his Gandhian Philosophy, He used Pad yatras as an activity to bring awareness among the community and also to pressurize the government to hear to the people.

Rajendra Singh played a catalyzing role in the building of 10000 johads in 1000 villages spread over 6500 sq.km. Out of these 3500 were built by TBS and as an after effect of these, the community was motivated to build the remaining 5100 structures. The area covers parts of the contiguous districts of Alwar, Dausa, Sawai Madhopur, Karoli and Jaipur districts. Johads and the other appropriate water structures have also been built in the districts of Jaisalmer, Ajmer, Udaipur and Bharatpur

As a result of all these efforts, the five seasonal rivulets Ruparel, Aravari, Sarasa, Bhagani and Jahajwali in the north eastern Rajasthan area which had nearly dried up have now become perennial. Water conservation gave numerous positive impacts on the communities inhabiting the area. Employment opportunities have increased and migration has reduced substantially. Studies have shown manifold increase in the enrollment of students in school and output of food grains and milk production.

Through his determination, vision, hard work and dedication, Rajendra Singh has transformed the life of people in 1058 villages of Aravali hills. He has turned the arid land cultivable, densely afforested large tracts making a wild life sanctuary by water management, made the dry rivers flow throughout year. His vision and leadership has got wide recognition across the world and he got the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership in the year 2001. His pioneering work in water management is an inspiration to many across the country.

***Information till December 2009**

Barefoot Engineer-T.J. David

Thumswamy Joseph David is a natural inventor, having to his credit over 200 innovations in the field of energy. It included efficient and eco-friendly technologies both in the field of conventional and non-conventional energy.

T.J. David was born on 22nd December 1948. David's father, a medical doctor, died when David was only five months old. Later his mother soon moved from Bangalore to Delhi, where the family struggled in great poverty to survive.

David joined in St. John's school in North Delhi, a boarding school for the poor run by priests. Bright enough to get two double promotions, he had to relinquish school after the fifth standard in order to give his aging mother a helping hand. He studied as a day scholar till the seventh standard, doing odd jobs on the side. David's creativity manifested itself early in his life. As a schoolboy he used to take his friends' toys apart and put them together. He is a self educated person. He has been doing research and development in energy sector for about 50 years. Always enchanted by things mechanical, David made a sewing machine for his mother when he was 18. By 1970, he patched together his other intervention a cop less loom, which didn't require shuttle. The following years saw a series of other interventions, and praise for his work poured in from the National Research Development Corporation (NRDC), the Ministry of Science and Technology, other government institutions and the private sector. Inspired by the lives of great scientists like Newton, Edison, Einstein and the Curies, David retained belief in himself despite having to scramble without degrees or contacts, near the bottom of the economic structure for years and he decided to take up these kinds of work increasingly focused on the needs of India's rural poor.



David has been working on livelihood, micro finance ventures, technologies to provide self employment and additional income generating technologies for weaker section as well as, young engineering graduates' projects to make them employers rather than those seeking employment.

David has been working on livelihood, micro finance ventures, technologies to provide self employment and additional income generating technologies for weaker section as well as, young engineering graduates' projects to make them employers rather than those seeking employment.

In the year 2000, he had more than 20 low-cost inventions to his credit in the field of appropriate technology. They include an animal-powered transmission system, a poultry care system, and a pump less cooler. He is currently seeking to commercialize a pedal-harvester. The current custom-built models sell for Rs 12,000 (U.S. \$650) as opposed to such available alternatives as a tractor-mounted reaper (\$8,700) and the combine-harvester (\$60,000). David sees two prime markets for this reaper: groups of reapers working in villages where they get low wages for their work and small (tractor less) farmers in villages where the cost of reaping is high.

The pedal-propelled harvester has been commended by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, the G.B. Pant Agriculture University, Nainital and the S.K.N. College of Agriculture, Jaipur.

David developed a low cost mechanized farming robot which can operate using both conventional and nonconventional energy sources. He developed about 15 types of technologies based on peddle powered production machines, with production capacity 5 kg onwards 30 kg per day. He also innovated another 15 types of technologies available based on draught animal (Bulls, Oxen, Camel, Donkey, Horse etc) power production machines, with production capacity 50 kg on wards to 500 kg per day.

David invented a unique solar crop harvest machine that works entirely on solar energy and has built-in photovoltaic panel of 200 volts. This harvester ensures a high level of power saving by replacing power transmission systems of There is also provision for a pedal wheel to make it much more maneuverable. The harvester costs only Rs.2.5 lakhs which is very low compared to the conventional harvesters which costs around Rs. 15 lakhs to Rs.22 lakhs.

David initiated a technical workshop in year 1984 along with another prominent social worker Sri Bunker Roy in Tilonia SWRC. Now it is internationally well know organization known as Barefoot Engineers Tilonia ' - Rajasthan.

David is one of the members the Inventor's Action Society which is India's first professional association of inventors which works on India's "craftsmen inventors" who, armed with few degrees or institutional connections, are increasingly disadvantaged. He is one of the recipients of most prestigious ASHOKA Fellowship. He had volunteered for many NGO's. In the year of 2000 he established one organization named TIES India (Technologist Inventors Engineers and Scientists). He joined in IIIT-Hyderabad as a Project Coordinator in Energy and Technology. At present he is very much occupied with the agenda of setting up a Technology Park, for 100 innovations for arranging demo as well as training and technology transfer program.

David's intelligence and persistence permitted him to continue and to come to understand how the systems confronting him so very unsympathetically work, and what must be done if they are to be reformed so that India's inventors can help the country develop the grassroots technologies it needs. He has received patent rights for 18 innovations so far.

David is currently working on the pedal reaper because he thinks it can enrich the lives of many poor people and also, in his own words, "out of my joy and my happiness." He invents because he loves the craft. After all, this barefoot inventor comments, "No one commanded the Wright brothers to make a plane."

***Information till January 2010**

Changed Face of Plague City – SR Rao

We all know Surat as the city of Diamonds and Textiles. This city was once also called as the Plague city as the city was struck with this panic epidemic in the year 1994. However, within three years after the epidemic struck, Surat, once known as the dirtiest city in the country, has turned into the most beautiful city and all it took for this was only one determined government official, SR Rao.

Suryadevara Ramachandra Rao (SR Rao) born in Andhra Pradesh on 9th January in 1954. He did graduation in physics, chemistry and mathematics and masters in social work and rural development. He joined in Civil Service in Gujarat in 1978. He held many positions during his service as an IAS officer. However the tenure of his work as a Municipal Commissioner of Surat from 1995 to 1997 is the most remembered as he changed the face of the city from the most unhygienic to the most beautiful.

The port, notoriously filthy and overcrowded city Surat (especially northern city of Surat) was attacked by plague in September 1994 due to continuous rain which lashed Surat for two months. The faulty drainage system could not handle this and the result was large-scale water logging. Hundreds of cattle and other animals died and the rats ran riot because of the floods and the municipal authorities were not prompt enough in clearing the city, which led to massive sanitation problems. The Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) had failed to provide basic sanitation and clean drinking water to a majority of the city's population. Estimates put the number of dead at 52 people, infected hundreds of others and about 3 lakh people fled from the city. It happened only because people freely threw their garbage on the streets and did not clean the filthy containers for months on end even as animal carcasses rotted on street corners. Surat had become host to diseases like malaria, jaundice and dengue fever. Even before the plague struck the city, these diseases had already assumed epidemic proportions.

In this context, SR Rao, IAS was appointed to Surat as Municipal Commissioner in May 1995. Faced with a city traumatized by the plague and a state government cringing over the adverse publicity, Rao started raiding eateries, roadside haunts, fast-food shops, restaurants and sweetmeat shops to demonstrate to the city that these are unhygienic. When he trampled on mounds of food with cockroaches and rats swarming over them, Rao caught the imagination of the people. The raids hit suppliers, manufacturers and all popular restaurants in the city were sealed till they cleaned up. Rao walked into the filthiest slums, encouraged people to clean up their surroundings. He told to civic sweepers what to do and got officials into the act. This act too hit the mark since an estimated 40 per cent of the city's population lived in slums, 80 per cent of them migrants. These slums were located on encroached municipal or private land, along major transport corridors, and near factory premises on low lying areas without proper drainage.

S R Rao shook the city administration including cleaning sewage lines, widening roads and improving slums. Each city department was being run like an insulate fiefdom. Administrative barriers were broken down through decentralization and joint teams that tried to overcome the old malaise of one department laying roads and the other digging them up a few months later. Ward officers were expected to listen to citizen complaints and act on them promptly. A "six-month, six-page" rule was introduced: Any city official who did not complete a task in six months was asked to explain the reasons in a six-page note. Rao once described the change in the administrative culture as a move from AC to DC, i.e. from air-conditioned offices to Daily Chores. Officers from all the six zones of the city would start their day at 7 am and supervise sweepers and cleaners on Surat streets. A unique and innovative night cleansing system was developed: Every street and corner was scrubbed at night and garbage bins cleared so that Suratis awoke to a clean city each morning. Within one year, through well orchestrated methods, administrative, legal, punitive and community motivation, the SMC increased the cleaning of accumulated garbage from 450 tonnes (50 per cent of the amount generated at the time of the plague) to almost 94 per cent of the 1,100 tonnes of garbage generated every day in 1995.

SR Rao talked with the local builders who built the buildings without proper drainage systems and convinced them to change their building structures. The SMC officials would draw up a line on the streets and mark the illegally constructed houses and the residents would demolish all of them. As a result of this drive, narrow lanes which could barely accommodate two-wheelers earlier became wide enough to allow buses and cars to move freely. Cleanliness became the order of the day. All this achievements were not a cakewalk for Rao. He had been threatened by many people and even from his higher officials sometimes. However, he did not care for any of them and moved forward in his pursuit to remove the scar of plague on the city.

SR Rao's decentralized system to clean up the city worked so well that it attracted researchers and urban managers to examine the reasons for its success. The filthiest city in the country had metamorphosed into the cleanest city within two years and once again Surat played host to hundreds of people, including teams from other Municipal Corporations, non-governmental organizations, doctors and researchers.

Though Rao moved out of Surat at the end of 1997 – two years after he had entered the city - it continues to be clean and has arguably become the most livable city in Gujarat. Swanky flyovers, broad clean roads, washed streets and spotless footpaths are now a part of this industrial city. Two years later, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage even declared Surat the second cleanest city after Chandigarh in India. For his services in the rebuilding of post-plague Surat, Rao was awarded the Public Service Excellence award instituted and administered by the All India Management Association to recognize, applaud and uphold the bureaucracy's commitment to public service.

***Information till February 2010**

‘Samaj Pragathi’ Mihir Shah

Mihir Shah is a well known development professional, working extensively to provide water and livelihood security to the poor in India. He has combined 20 years of living and working at the grass-roots with academic research and policy advocacy. He believes strongly that a new paradigm of development needed to be forged in India, one that is based on the principles of sustainability, equity and people’s empowerment.

Born on 25th November, 1956, Mihir Shah graduated in Economics from St. Stephen's College, Delhi (where he won the KC Nag Economics Prize) and did his postgraduation from the Delhi School of Economics (where he was Merit Scholar) in 1970s. M.Phil. in Applied Economics: at Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum. He has a Ph.D. for his Dissertation titled: "Capitalist Development and the Transformation of Agrarian Relations in Chingleput District c.1780-1983" from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Mihir began his career as project associate at the Centre for Development Studies where he conducted M.Phil teaching programme on "Macro-economic Framework for Analyzing Agrarian Economies" and guided students on their dissertation. He moved on to work on the Project "Inter-regional Variations in Agrarian Structure" prepared for the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). To explore fresh terrains beyond the ivory towers of conventional academia and traveled extensively in rural, tribal India in pursuit of a fresh understanding, necessary for the formulation of an alternative Indian vision of development. These travel culminated in formation of Samaj Pragati Sahayog (SPS) along with similar minded friends in the year 1990.

Samaj Pragati Sahayog (SPS) is one of India's largest grass-roots initiatives for water and livelihood security. It works in 50 villages in the Adivasi pocket of the Dewas district of Madhya Pradesh, known as the Bagli tehsil in the Narmada valley. They believe that farmer-driven, locationspecific watershed development combined with bio-diverse agriculture, other nature-based livelihoods and microfinance, can result in sustained higher incomes and empowered communities, providing an enduring panacea to India's suicide-ridden dry lands. Over the years, the SPS programs have resulted in drinking water security to 20,000 people, a rise in the percentage of irrigated areas by 150 per cent, a 90 per cent reduction in indebtedness, 80 per cent decrease in distress migration and 100 per cent increase in income. It works in partnership with 122 CBOs on a million acres of land across 72 districts in 12 states.

Dr. Shah has been actively involved in "Narmada Bacho Andolan" and issues of "Right to food". He was part of a team that devised a detailed blueprint for technical redesign of the Narmada Project, which would enable the resolution of the drinking water crisis of Gujarat, while simultaneously reducing submergence caused by the dams by over 60%. He assisted Baba Amte in preparing studies on Narmada Project "Cry, the Beloved Narmada" (1989) and "The Case Against the Narmada Project and the Alternative Perspective" (1990). In 2007 he co-founded the National Consortium of Civil Society Organisations that works to support Panchayat Raj institutions for more effective implementation of NREGA.

He has held important positions like Member, Governing Body, Andhra Pradesh Society for Social Audit and Transparency, Member, Central Employment Guarantee Council, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India (2009), Adviser to National Commissioner, Supreme Court of India in the Right to Food case (2002-2009). Honorary Adviser, Technical Committee on Watershed Programmes in India in the Parthasarathy Committee. Chairperson, Sub-Group on Review of Existing Strategies for Development of Rainfed Areas for XIth Five Year Plan, Planning Commission, Member, Project Steering Committee, UNDP-GEF Project, Forest Department, Government of Madhya Pradesh. He was also part of the Hameed Committee set up to suggest a completely new structure for CAPART. He has worked as faculty at Baba Amte Centre for People's Empowerment (1998-2009), one of only 7 national centres for training in Watershed Development, recognized by the CAPART.

He has written over 100 articles important publications like Economic and Political Weekly. He has co authored many important articles along with P.S. Vijay Shankar titled like "Watershed Reforms in India", "New Development Paradigms and Challenges for Western and Central India" and "Land Reforms in Madhya Pradesh: Redefining the Agenda" in 2002. "Land Reforms in India: Issues of Equity in Rural Madhya Pradesh". Dr. Shah has co-authored a study report for the UNDP on India's Drylands in 1998. The study brings out the macro-economic significance of watershed programmes for food security and employment guarantee in India. Authored NABARD study "Agrarian Structure and Modernization of Indian Agriculture: A study in Inter-regional variations" (1986). He was largely responsible for drafting its landmark report that argues for radical reforms in India's watershed sector, as honorary adviser to the Technical Committee on Watershed Programmes set up by the Government of India in 2006.

He has received many awards like Social Entrepreneurship Award of American India Foundation, New York, Doreen Mashler Award of International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) for Outstanding Contribution to Integrated Watershed Management for Sustainable Development, Ashok Gondhia Manav Sewa Puraskar of Young Men's Gandhian Association, Gujarat and Diwaliben Mohanlal Mehta Award for Outstanding Social Service presented by former President of India.

Mihir Shah is currently Secretary of Samaj Pragati Sahayog and a member of the National Executive of the Ministry of Rural Development. He draws inspiration from the life and work of Baba Amte. Since 1990, he is actively engaged in formulating a concrete and comprehensive vision for an alternative Indian model of equitable and sustainable growth.

***Information till March 2010**

Leading the Sandbox Development– Dr Deshpande

Gururaj 'Desh' Deshpande, the founder and chairman of Sycamore Networks Inc., is an influential technology entrepreneur and visionary. Widely respected for his generous contributions and donations for various social causes, Deshpande is leading various development initiatives majorly in the sandbox area of North-western Karnataka.

Gururaj Deshpande is the son of a labor commissioner in post-British India. He obtained B.Tech. in Electrical Engineering in 1973 from IIT Madras. He got his M.E. in Electrical Engineering from the University of New Brunswick in Canada and a Ph.D. from the Queens University in Canada in Data Communications. After completing his studies, Deshpande worked on the architecture of Optical Fibre Network. He taught at the Queens University in Kingston, Canada for some time. Later he gave his services to Codex Corporation, a subsidiary of Motorola. In 1988 he co-founded Coral Network Corporation and later founded Cascade Communications Corporation for which he was also the Chairman.



Sycamore Networks was founded by him along with two other scientists from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1998 with just three products and two customers. The company manufactures Fibre Optic Cables providing high bandwidth for the Internet. This organization has now grown into a multimillion dollar company and Deshpande is recognized as one of the top Indian billionaires.

Since the beginning Deshpande is very generous in donating money for various social causes. He donated large sums to IIT Madras Alumni Association of North America for support to IIT Madras through the Deshpande Foundation which was established by him in 1996. His generous donations (Initially 20 million dollars) made possible MIT's Centre for Technological Innovation at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Centre is involved in research and collaborates with entrepreneurs, MIT faculty, alumni and students, and new companies. The Centre awards grants directly into MIT research, and is sponsoring research in broad range of areas, including Biotechnology, Information Technology, and Tiny Technologies. The centre also partners with investors, entrepreneurs, and local industry to help commercialize MIT technology.

The Deshpande Foundation is one of the leading philanthropic foundations in Massachusetts in the areas of innovation, entrepreneurship and international development. Through its grant making, the Deshpande Foundation has helped launch innovative companies, helped NGOs develop an international presence and developed partnerships with some of the most remarkable change agents in the world today. The Deshpande Foundation's primary activities lie in three areas: Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Growth.

In India, Deshpande Foundation started its activities in North -western Karnataka, the area which is called as Sandbox. Sandbox is a geographically defined area of North-western Karnataka that centres on the sister cities of Hubli-Dharwad, the cities that Desh and Jaishree Deshpande (Desh Deshpande's wife) come from. The Sandbox, as an area of contained development, is a region in which Deshpande hopes to promote innovation and inter-organizational collaboration as methods of creating sustainable change. Deshpande Centre for Social Entrepreneurship has started in this area and is emerging as a human resources hub for social entrepreneurship.

The Deshpande Foundation gives large donations to the organizations which are serving the poor and focuses majorly on four sectors in its funding: Agriculture, Education, Health, and Livelihood. Through his foundation Dr Desh Pande is supporting may organizations in the Sandbox area such as BAIF, SCOPE, Srijan, Techno serve, Agastya International, India Development Service, Jagruthi, Manovikasa, Prerana, RAPID etc to name a few.

Since 2000, Dr. Deshpande has been funding approximately one initiative a year and is actively involved in building these organizations. These initiatives include Tejas Networks, Airvana, A123 Systems and Sandstone Capital. He and his wife, Jaishree, are involved in several non profit initiatives that include support for MIT, IIT, TiE, Akshaya Patra Foundation, Public Health Foundation of India and the Social Entrepreneurship Sandbox in India. Akshaya Patra, the world's largest NGO-run school lunch program, which addresses two of India's most pressing social problems: hunger and access to education. In 2006, Akshaya Patra received a major grant from the Deshpande Foundation to expand its operations in the Sandbox area and to open a US office, known as "Akshaya Patra USA". The purpose of the US office is to build awareness, seek financial support to both sustain and expand current operations, and explore strategic partnerships with government, academic, and nonprofit entities to enhance Akshaya Patra's program as it nears its goal of serving one million children and beyond. The Deshpande Foundation supported the initial endowment for Public Health Foundation of India, along with the Gates Foundation, the McKinsey Foundation, and the government of India. PHFI was started as a response to the limited institutional capacity for strengthening training, research and policy development in the area of Public Health. Desh Deshpande also sits on PHFI's board.

Deshpande believes in bringing together individuals with diverse experiences and skills to work together to address the challenges of development. A number of partnerships and activities promoted by Deshpande Foundation help achieve this goal in the Sandbox area. It organizes many leadership and exchange programs such as Deshpande Innovators, Junior fellowship programs and Sandbox fellows etc. Deshpande believes in Albert Einstein's words 'Try not to become a man of success. Rather, become a man of values' and is truly living those words. His efforts are leading the Sandbox towards development.

***Information till April 2010**

Empowering Dalits and Women – Hilda Grace

Hilda Grace Coelho (Rani) is co-founder and chief executive of Centre for Rural Studies and Development (CRSD). For the past nineteen years she has touched upon issues that hinder lives of Poor, Dalits and Women through this organization. Preventing child labour, providing primary education, creating livelihood opportunities for dalits, providing reproductive health care for women and rainwater harvesting are some of issues that she has worked on. She has chosen Madakasira, Rolla, Parigi, Rappthadu, Tadimarri, Atmakur, Beluguppa, Narpala, Somandepalli, Kuderu, Uravakonda and Vajrakaruru Mandals of Anantapur District in Andhra Pradesh as her karma bhoomi (place of work).

Rani was born on 7th April, 1965. She has a master's degree in Sociology and has also obtained a P.G. Diploma in Health Management from Georgia State University, USA and Diploma in Community Health from Oddenchatram, Tamilnadu, India. She is also trained by MDF, South Asia on Advanced Management skills.



Rani started her work in the development sector as a Trainer in Young India Project on Community Health for 5 years. She was then selected to implement UNDP poverty alleviation programme in Madakasira Mandal. In 1991 she co-founded Centre for Rural Studies and Development (CRSD) with a vision to build a just society where all people - men and women are treated equally and that they enjoy social, economic and political justice. In pursuance of its vision CRSD has set before itself two main goals: 1). To empower the rural poor, especially the dalits and women to organize themselves around their issues and struggle for their rights. 2). To support and develop their human, material, and environmental resources. CRSD is also involved in state level and national level campaigns to advocate for policies friendly to the poor. Ongoing programs of the organization are Education of Dalit children, forming Peoples Monitoring Committee (PMC), Developing Civil Society Advocacy on safe drinking Water and Sanitation.

Rani was instrumental in implementing the Reproductive Health Project supported by The Ford Foundation in 80 villages of Madakasira, Rolla and Agali mandals for the last ten years. Through CRSD she has been able to organize women and created awareness on how to access state resources and schemes. She has also motivated them to actively participate in the Gram panchayats and other political bodies. She has also been able to enable women to assert their rights when faced by gender based discrimination and violence. In recognition of her leadership she was made convener of Andhra Pradesh Women's Network (APWN) in 2003-2004. In the field of education Rani has been working towards integrating Child Labourers into mainstream education systems as well as to improve the quality of Government Schools. Highlighting the issues of rights of Dalits she has been supporting them in their legal battles against atrocities cases and also joins them in their demands for effective implementation of SC (Schedule Castes), ST (Schedule Tribes) Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989. In order to provide employment to the poor in drought prone areas CRSD has taken up leadership in forming a district level network to demand for effective implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA).

Moved by the water problem in the drought prone Ananthpur district she has tried various means and forums to resolve it. She worked as a convener of Jala Samakya a regional Network on Water and Sanitation Issues. Further, she represented gravity of water issue in the strategic planning meeting of Water Aid, held at London in 1999. She was part of the Indian delegation that went to the Second World Water Forum convention at Hague, Netherlands in 2000 as well as in the 3rd World Water Forum meetings at Kyoto, Japan in March 2003 where she presented the outcome of the NGO's statement in the Ministerial Conference. In recognition of the command and concern that she has on the issue she was invited to speak in the conference on the Human Right to Water at Hanover, Germany by Bread for the World in 2003. In the same year she was invited by the Banyan Tree Foundation (BTF) for an exposure to education projects in South Africa. She was also a panelist in the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico City in 2006 where she shared experiences and strategies in Gender Mainstreaming in water related projects. She participated in the 5th World Water Forum meetings at Istanbul, Turkey in March 2009. As networking is crucial in such advocacy efforts she is associated with regional as well as national level networks on Right to water. She has been Convener of Fresh Water Action Network, South Asia – AP Chapter.

Rani and her organization (CRSD) have developed extensive study reports on development issues specific to Ananthpur district. CRSD provides technical support to other NGOs working in that region and share training modules prepared by them in the course of their work. Further, CRSD has developed demonstrative models in the area of poverty alleviation, rural sanitation, safe drinking water and watershed development.

Hilda Grace Coelho (Rani) is a staunch believer of the fact that poverty can be alleviated by organizing and educating the vulnerable communities. She has motivated many people at various levels local, regional and national levels to join her in this endeavor. She continues to provide leadership to various groups, networks and forums that share her concerns. Livelihoods wishes that she continues to inspire many, continue to work till all her dreams come true!

***Information till May 2010**

Nilima in the Temple of Service

A professional by training, Nilima Khetan, has made her way into the development sector. Her 25 years of development work have not only contributed in bringing a significant change in the lives of the poor with whom she worked, but also contributed in bringing more number of professionals into the sector.

Nilima Khetan was born in Delhi on August 3, 1961. She completed her B.Com Honors from Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi University in 1982. Later she moved to Institute of Rural Management, Anand to complete her MBA. On completion of MBA, she joined an NGO called Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN), a leading NGO in the country which was at that time trying to bring professionals into the voluntary sector, as a Project Executive in the year 1984.

In 1984-85, she went to Anand Niketan Ashram, Vadodara district on an assignment from PRADAN to professionalize their work culture and also to start some income generating activities including patch work, banana fiber production and acrylic fiber weaving etc. for rural women. While at PRADAN, she did an extensive 'need assessment' exercise which involved visiting various NGOs in the country and assessing 'need' for management skills in the sector. Later she moved to Seva Mandir in the year 1985 to assist the economic empowerment initiatives of the organization while continuing to be on the roles of PRADAN.

Seva Mandir works mainly in natural resource development and sustainability, village development, women's empowerment, early childhood education and health care, continuing education, and children's welfare. Their scope of projects has allowed them to affect 70,000 households and 300,000 residents in the Udaipur and Rajsamand districts. Nilima Khetan worked on the setting up of the new forestry program in Seva Mandir, which later on grew to become one of the largest initiatives within the organization and also simultaneously responsible for all field operations in one out of the five geographic areas in which Seva Mandir is working. In her early years at Seva Mandir, she became role model and magnet for highly qualified people to join Seva Mandir and work in remote villages. She has also pioneered a style of working that enabled professionals, villagers and locally recruited staff to combine their skills and expertise. In December, 1992 she resigned from PRADAN and moved on to the roles of Seva Mandir. Thereafter, she looked after the Planning, Research and Training division of Seva Mandir which is called as People's Management School.

Nilima Khetan became the Chief Executive of Seva Mandir in the year 1999 where she is responsible for leading a team of 300 colleagues. She is responsible for the overall effectiveness of and coherence within Seva Mandir programs, and for representing Seva Mandir at various external forums. Under her leadership, Seva Mandir has achieved the status of one of the leading NGOs in the country, not only because of its size but also because it has been able to develop strategies in respect to organizational issues and programmatic work that are significantly impacting the well-being of deprived people. Today Seva Mandir's work encompasses the area of governance, enhancing natural resource development and enterprise promotion to strengthen livelihoods and human capabilities like health, education and women's empowerment and extends to nearly 600 tribal villages.

While carrying on the responsibilities at Seva Mandir, Nilima has also served as the Acting Director of IRMA, Anand from 2006 June to May-200. At that time, IRMA was going through a leadership crisis and as a Board Member, she was asked to oversee this transition and prepare the ground for a new leadership to take over. This task, which she handled for one year, added a lot to her understanding of the challenges of revitalizing institutions.

Apart from her involvement with Seva Mandir, she is also on the boards of several other organizations like the Institute of Financial Management and Research, Chennai; the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur; Gram Vikas, Orissa; WASSAN, Hyderabad; and several others. She was a Member of the first National Standing Committee of CAPART for Watershed Development; a Member of Planning Commission's Joint Machinery for Collaborative Relationship between the Government and the Voluntary Sector and more recently a member of Central Government's Committee on Land Reforms.

Being the board member of several institutions, she has been involved in various activities like addressing the issues of gender and drinking water, girls education, women's empowerment, problems of sanitation and water, promoting innovations that positively impact the environment, issues of watershed and land development, microfinance, encouraging voluntarism in the country.

Nilima Khetan finds immense satisfaction in doing things perfectly, however small the task is, and also in putting public resources to proper use. Working in Seva Mandir brought her in contact with many people and by working with all of them, her self-understanding as a person and as a development worker has improved which she feels as her greatest achievement.

For her sustained contributions to the field of development, she has been nationally recognized. She was awarded the Laxmipat Singhania-IIM Lucknow National Leadership award for young leaders by India's Prime Minister in December 2006. In March 2007, she received the Maharana Mewar Award from the Maharana Mewar Foundation, for work of permanent value to society.

'To be effective, one has to learn humility in recognizing that it takes all kind of people to make headway in bringing about changes in society' is what she believes. She understands that alleviating poverty and improving governance is a daunting task and one is required repeatedly to question one's deeply held views on how it might be done. Her long and hard journey of self-reflection and relentless engagement in the field gained her many insights and with these learnings she is moving ahead to make a difference in the lives of people with whom she is working.

***Information till June 2010**

Rural Marketer - Pradeep Kashyap

Pradeep Kashyap needs no introduction for people in development sector. He is considered to be the father of rural marketing in India and has been a pioneer in designing and implementing innovative business models in the social development sector, especially for those in the Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP). He has combined rich experience he gained in the corporate world with more than two decades of experience in the social sector to design several exceptional projects since the late 1980s.

In his career of 40 years for the first 17 years he worked only for corporates like Exide, Bosch and Denso and the remaining 23 years he worked for both development and corporate sectors. This opportunity of knowing both the sectors helped him to invent 3M, a comprehensive livelihoods promotion model and innovative rural marketing initiatives like Gramsree melas. Because of this unique combination of expertise he was honoured to be Marketing Advisor to ministry of rural development, Government of India and to serve in the Prime Minister's Office and Chief Minister's Committees on Rural Development and also on the National Committee of the RBI. He works as consultant to both the World Bank and the UN.



Pradeep's engagement with the development sector started in 1989 when he was appointed as marketing advisor to the ministry of rural development (MRD) Government of India. To create a platform for artisans to bring their products to the consumers in the cities with no interference from middlemen as well as to help them get full value for their products he started a concept of sales exhibition called Gramsree melas. It is estimated that close to 70-80 such exhibitions have been held till date. These melas were used as a space to conduct training program for artisans to learn new technologies and designs. With special focus on women especially poor women artisans; he took up a project called Women's Enterprise Management Training Outreach Program (WEMTOP) initiated by World Bank in the year 1993. The program aimed at training poor women artisan in business skills.

In 1993 itself he started MART, an organization that brings partnership between the corporate and the community. Since he came from the corporate sector and started in the working the social sector, he could see a potential for bridges and synergies between these two sectors. As a result MART has a very strong business mind of the corporate and social heart of the community with compassion for the poor. MART makes corporate understand the community language and the community to understand the corporate participation as well as the government. MART offers solutions from research to strategy and capacity building to understand the emerging markets. MART is also recognized by Lead India for linking farmers to markets' in India.

Pradeep is responsible in leading MART team to develop the most comprehensive livelihoods promotion model - the 3M- Microfinance, Market and Micro planning, a model which promotes large scale employment in rural areas. The first M stands for Microfinance as money or access to capital is necessary to start any business, the second M stands for market which provides business and the third M is 'Micro planning', based on the assessment of natural, human and physical capital available. He has demonstrated usefulness of the 3M model while working on Project titled 'Shakti' with Hindustan Lever. The project aimed at promoting SHG women as innovative micro entrepreneurs like taking up dealership of companies. Similarly he has developed a collective marketing model involving 7500 women from 500 backward tribal villages in Orissa. He has conceived and organized 300 Gramshree melas for sale of rural products in urban centers. From this initiative alone 46,000 women in 12 states have been benefited and each of them earns Rs 1,000 per month as profit from this business. MART's 3M Approach for Micro Enterprise Promotion has been presented in international forums in USA, Srilanka, Philippines and others

He has pioneered another low cost, last mile rural distribution model using village volunteers on bicycles for Colgate, Godrej, Eveready, Heinz, Tata Tea and other companies. He has championed the introduction of rural marketing in the academic curriculum in the business management schools in India and Bangladesh and has authored many books on rural marketing liked by students and practitioners alike.

In recognition of his contribution he received several awards. He received best rural marketing initiative award for project titled 'Arogya Parivaar', silver award for best long term rural marketing, gold medal for long term rural marketing initiative, special jury award and Jamnalal Bajaj endowment award. He attributes his success to team work, his totally flexible, non hierarchical organization stands as a testimony to this belief. He also believes that one can acquire knowledge only if one is humble. His vision, belief and professionalism and way of life is an inspiration to many young creative minds who would like to find every possible way out to redeem poor from poverty.

***Information till July 2010**

Creator of Water Warriors— Anupam Mishra

Water is indispensable to life. It has defined the life and livelihoods of people across. However, from being an unlimited and available natural gift for India, water has now changed into a limited resource and unavailable in many places of the country. The root of the problem is giving more importance to land than water. In this context, believing that this is the high time to put water first, Anupam Mishra has dedicated his life to reviving traditional methods of water harvesting. And along the way, he has created a legion of water warriors.

Mishra's engagement with the environment came early – his father Bhawani Prasad Mishra, a Gandhian poet-author and environmentalist, was associated with the Gandhi Peace Foundation (GPF) since its inception in 1964. After completing his Master's in Hindi literature from Delhi University in 1969, Mishra decided to follow in his father's footsteps and joined the GPF as a researcher at a salary of Rs 350 a month. His mandate to study water shortage in India's driest areas led Mishra to crisscross the country – he travelled to Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh and discovered that over 200,000 tanks were dug across India before British rule. Many years of studying India's driest regions has convinced him that traditional systems like step wells, tanks, ponds and bunds are the best way to tackle water shortage. Further, his travels made him aware that our forefathers were far more aware and educated than we are.



Rajasthan especially was a mine of information for Mishra. In the 1980s, he met Surendramal Mohnot, director of the School of Desert Sciences in Jodhpur, who made Mishra aware that talab (ponds) could be built in towns. Water harvesters such as Jethusingh Bhatti, Bhagwandas Maheshwari and Dindayal Ojha gave him great insight into the water bodies of Jaisalmer. And in 1988, Mishra saw a kuin, which provides sweet water, for the first time in Taranagar in the state's Churu district - it was more than 100 years old. He also learnt that that a kuin is quite distinct from a kuan or a well. A kuan can be dug anywhere to obtain groundwater. With a normal depth of 300 ft, it can provide water collected on the water table for years. But although rainwater seeps into the water table, it becomes undrinkable when mixed with other minerals of the soil. On the other hand, a kuin primarily collects rainwater and normally has a depth of not more than 30-40 ft. It can only be dug in areas where a gypsum belt is naturally present - the gypsum acts as barrier, preventing the water from turning saline. Essentially, a kuin traps moisture between the sand and gypsum layer and protects water from percolating into the water table and mixing with soil minerals. Thus, the water obtained from it is sweet and safe for drinking. Mishra was amazed of the knowledge that our fore fathers had in water harvesting technology.

With the experiences gained through his travels, Mishra has written two books on traditional tank management in India and various traditional water harvesting systems in Rajasthan titled Aaj bhi khare hai talab (The ponds are still as good as gold) and Rajasthan ki rajat boonde (The radiant raindrops of Rajasthan). These books on water harvesting with drawings and rich examples, have gone on to sell nearly 100,000 copies and been translated into five languages, including French. Most significant, they have spawned a legion of water warriors. These include not just well-known examples like NGO Magsaysay Award in 2001, and Harmony Silver Award winner Laxman Singh, but thousands of unsung Indians who have built their own reservoirs. The people who have translated his books into Bengali and Punjabi were inspired by his writings and they themselves became water harvesters. There are many other people across the country inspired by his writings and have taken up the agenda of water harvesting and reviving traditional water harvesting structures in their areas. Around 25,000 small and big traditional rainwater harvesting systems have been built in recent times. Many more have been restored.

Till date, Mishra declined to take a single rupee as royalty for his books, which do not even have a copyright. In fact, he shuns the limelight and dislikes interviews, contented with gandhian way of life. Mishra and his team of committed volunteers at GPF also work to promote the environmental campaigns on various rural development agencies and prepare survey reports on distressed areas that need guidance. Mishra has participated in many national and international events to spread the word of conserving water.

Mishra is someone who is known for his eco-artistry – he takes old cartons, sticks pictures on them and revamps them into shelves for his office. And he's also made an intricate mosaic from pictures of Gandhi on a broken wooden cabinet. He is also one of the founder members of Center for Environment and Food Security which works on research, advocacy and campaign on the issues of poverty, food security, sustainable livelihoods etc.

Anupam Mishra has received the Indira Gandhi National Environment Award and continues his association with the Gandhi Peace Foundation working in the field of environment protection and water conservation. He continues to travel to different parts of the country, while keeping in touch with grassroot-level water harvesters and NGOs and inspiring them. For many of us traditional water harvesting structures like step wells, ponds, tanks etc may be the remnant of the past. But for people like Anupam Mishra they hold the key for future.

***Information till August 2010**

Entrepreneurs' Madhura

A distinguished entrepreneur herself, Madhura Chatrapathi, has been working with the missionary zeal, entrepreneurial vision and institutional commitment to foster an entrepreneurial society. Through her organization AWAKE, she is making a difference in the lives of hundreds of women and men through entrepreneurship development.

Madhura Chatrapathi is a graduate in Science. After completing her graduation she has done her diploma course in journalism first and postgraduate diploma in marketing & advertising later. She also did a course in dehydration of foods in Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI).



She imbibed the spirit of enterprise and volunteerism, working for the larger good and public cause from her illustrious father Sri M C Rajamannar. Innovation has been a hallmark of her public and profession career. She is a distinguished entrepreneur herself, obtaining a simple technology from CFTRI and building on it to be an industry leader in the area of dehydrated food ingredients.

She started a company, Food Associates Bangalore. It was emerged as a leading customised food ingredient manufacturers for both domestic and international markets. She was the first woman to obtain know how from Defence Food Research Lab and supply precooked dehydrated foods to defence forces. As a business person she set up her business of a de-hydration plant in 1981 with knowhow from CFTRI for Tamarind Powder. After two years of struggle she diversified into a range of de-hydrated food ingredients that today meet international standards and caters to international markets like North America, Europe, Australia and Japan and also domestic market that includes multinationals. Today, Food Associates Bangalore is a leading customized food ingredients producer and a sourcing agent for a range of ingredients for its very discerning customers. FAB's B2B operations mean - processing against order, no inventory pile up and no major problems with marketing. She received the Outstanding Entrepreneur Award from Rotary in 1982.

Madhura is the founder President of AWAKE (Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka), a premier Association of Women Entrepreneurs in the country. Its mission is to empower women through entrepreneurship development to improve their economic condition. It supports both start up level & growth level women entrepreneurs from the urban as well as rural areas. To achieve its objectives AWAKE has formulated a module which includes Through Awake she conducts need based skill development programs in specific sectors, like food, floriculture, vermiculture, pottery, handicrafts, eco-friendly products etc, for the people who want to be entrepreneurs.

Madhura founded Asian Centre for Entrepreneurial Initiatives (ASCENT) in 1996 through which she has been working in group enterprise, clustering, incubation process and entrepreneurship development in Asian and African region, and in other developing countries. She has also established Association of Food Scientists and Technologists (AFST). Her work in the field of Entrepreneurship Development has earned her a special place in the International Agencies and Development Organisations. She is an internationally sought after resource person. She has been providing expert advice and leading workshops in over 40 countries, for variety of International organizations including UNDP, ILO, UNIDO, World Bank, Economic Commission for Africa.

Madhura serves on the Governing Bodies of Institute of Social and Economic Change; Centre of Entrepreneurship Development, Madurai; Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDI), Ahmedabad and the State Bank of Mysore. Of the several first to her credit, it must be mentioned that she is the first woman Rotary District Governor (1998-99) in South Asia. She is also serving on the Advisory Committees of SIDBI and IDBI. She served as a member on the National Entrepreneurship Development Board, Government of India.

With her vast experience both in the fields of business entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, Madhura authored 3 handbooks and a training manual on entrepreneurship. She has given over 150 talks on radio on entrepreneurship. She has delivered over 1000 talks motivating, inspiring and educating hundreds of young boys and girls in schools and colleges, women, youth and entrepreneurs. she finds time to provide business and career counselling always.

Her efforts have been recognised by both State and Central agencies. NSIC 40th Anniversary Award was presented by the President of India for her outstanding contribution to small scale industries, the Kempegowda Day Award from the Mayor of City of Bangalore for her contribution in self-employment in the city, Government of Karnataka Rajyothsava Award etc. Apart from receiving the highest Award of the Rotary International, "Service Above Self", she recently received the A.R. Bhat Award from Entrepreneurs International for her outstanding contribution in entrepreneurship development. She has also received US State Department's "Distinguished International Visitor Alumni Award".

Madhura Chatrapathi is continuing in the field of entrepreneurship development with the same missionary zeal with which she started her career and is widely recognized as a successful business and social entrepreneur.

***Information till September 2010**

Developing Humane Action - Vasimalai

M.P.Vasimalai, a management graduate from the best B-School, has taken the path of development himself and inspired many other professionals to walk through the path which he has laid. Since thirty years he has been in the business of building institutions and people for humane action and making a difference to the lives of many poor and marginalized people on a scale.

M.P. Vasimalai was born in 1956 in a large family which belongs to a village near Madurai of Tamil Nadu. As a child, he was a good student, excelling especially in mathematics. After his graduation in Agronomy, he served for two years on an irrigation research program with Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. At that time with the advice of a friend he sat for the Common Admission Test through which he qualified for pursuing management at Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.



By the time Vasimalai has completed his management course, Vijay Mahajan, Aloysius Fernandez, Deep Joshi and few others were proposing the establishment of Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN) with a view to attract management professionals to assist NGOs. Vasimalai joined PRADAN as its founding staff member. Later he arrived in Chennai deputed by PRADAN to work with ASSEFa (Association of Sarva Seva Farms). ASSEFa is the organization formed to safeguard the lands handed over to Acharya Vinoba Bhave Sarvodaya movement as Bhoodan (Land donation). Vasi, as a professional manager, took to writing proposals, raising funds, taking donors to villages and so on. He was drilling wells, planning livelihood schemes, working on education, hygiene and every obvious symptom of an unsustainable scene.

In 1987 Anna University in Chennai began a study of sustainable schemes for water security which is funded by Ford Foundation. They discovered the obvious: that without recharging villages' water bodies with rain water, capital assets like pumps and irrigation systems have no meaning. Vasi was consulted for his knowledge of villages' social structures, in order to organize people in water harvesting. This was a major turning point in his life. He had been a farm child and yet, it had taken him 32 years to look past 'modern' education to understand sustainable living. His eyes began to see villages differently. His ceaseless proposals-writing and fund raising had scaled from Rs.1 crore to Rs.30 crores in his five years with ASSEFa. This had been poured sincerely into villages with no leakages. Yet, from sustainability point of view there were few successes. Most initiatives needed constant refunding.

PRADAN then became convinced that professionals must themselves become innovators in development and not remain mere managers. Vasi ended his deputation to ASSEFa and returned to PRADAN. In 1990, PRADAN conceived the Kalanjiam idea ['granary', in Tamil]. It was a micro-finance initiative for women and it became, after two years of field work for an initial breakthrough, a runaway success. Simultaneously, Vasi set up a team to start work on the traditional water bodies at Madurai. In 1992 he took over as the Executive Director of PRADAN and the head office shifted to Madurai. The next five years took him all over the rural heartland of North India in Bihar, Orissa, Rajasthan, West Bengal etc to consolidate, strengthen and broaden the scope and depth of the work of PRADAN. PRADAN believes that Ideas must be conceived, tested, proven and then scaled to become well-oiled systems- and then left to people themselves to manage. Keeping this in view, PRADAN thought it fit to spin off Development of Humane Action (DHAN) Foundation, by 1997 with Vasimalai as its Executive Director.

DHAN originally started work with savings and credit groups, involving 25,000 families. Today, it has become a complex set of professional institutions including the Tata- DHAN Academy for training development professionals and people's institutions working with thematic focus on insurance, savings and credit and tank water federations.

Vasimalai contends that the work of the Foundation is his calling. Looking back, he says that this lack of ambiguity in understanding the purpose of the work and his own role in it was critical in ensuring its continuous growth even beyond his own plans. And it continues to provide daily enthusiasm to see what will happen further. This ease of acceptance of both, people and tasks, however humble; as well as the will to be led by the collectivity is evident in the culture of the organization. Vasimalai's simplicity of conduct is repeatedly referred to as a critical strength of the organization. He remains to be honest, transparent and patient continuously; and accessible to all the people in the Foundation without barriers.

Vasimalai is holding various positions in national and international forums, working groups, task forces and missions of Central and State governments on themes related to Natural Resource Management, Livelihood Promotion and Institutional Development etc. He believes that every person has innate potential in them and he says "Take almost any one of the person around. Show him/her the way. Give opportunities. Present challenges and they excel". Vasimalai, a country boy who graduated from the best B-School, himself proves this to be true.

***Information till October 2010**

CmF Jaipal Singh

Jaipal Singh is a leading development worker in Rajasthan facilitating support to rural poor women through micro-finance and other services towards their improved livelihoods and lives.

Jaipal Singh Koushik was born in a small village called IGRAH in district Jind of Haryana on 22nd July 1964. He is the youngest one among three brothers and two sisters. His father is small farmer of 7 acres (about 3 hectare) land and at that time all of the land was rain fed. During early childhood days, they had agriculture, had two buffalos and a cow. They also had a small grocery shop which his father and bothers used to look after. Agriculture was almost entirely looked after by his mother.



Jaipal Singh got his education in village school till 10th standard. When he was in high school, he was actively contributing in agricultural operations like sowing of seeds. He was also actively involved in harvesting and thrashing and transportation of grains and fodder. After school, he had to take animals for grazing in fields. He was little reluctant to do all those works then but now in retrospection he realized that all these works gave him good knowledge about farming.

Jaipal scored 74% marks in 10th board exams and he was the top scorer in about 6-7 villages. Gaining more than 70% marks was a great achievement and his parents were very proud of him. After completing his school, he thought of going to college in Jind but his father thought that there were too many boys who have gone to college and got spoiled. Someone suggested that he should study agriculture in Haryana Agriculture University, Hisar. He completed his graduation (B.Sc Hons in Agri Economics) from this University. While he was in his final year, he got a job in Sri Ran Fertilizers and Chemical Limited which he did not join. On the suggestion of a friend he wrote entrance test of Institute of Rural Management, Anand and IIM, Ahmedabad. He cleared both the exams and chose to join IRMA.

After passing out from IRMA, Jaipal Singh joined National Dairy Development board (NDDB) in a special project called Tree Growers Cooperative Project, in 1987. Next year (1988) he was posted to field as member of Spear Head Team in Ajmer (Rajasthan) on his request. This is the place where he learnt a lot about rural development, community mobilization, institutional building, dealing with government and most importantly the honesty and dedication of people working in NDDB that time. Within 3 years he was promoted as Team Leader for Rajasthan. He was there till 2005 and during this period his team had promoted Tree Growers Cooperative Societies in about 100 villages and had got about 3500 hectares of revenue wastelands leased to these coop societies from state government. With technical and financial support from project team, the societies converted almost barren lands to good village woodlots for fodder and fuel-wood.

In 1995 Jaipal Singh came to Anand as manager of commercial activities of National Tree Growers Cooperative Federation (The project had by then been established as an organization). There he was in charge of a solvent extraction plant – manufacturing neem based bio pesticide and also a saw mill. He remained there till 1998 and during that period, established the factory, commissioned the plan, got registrations of land, plant, clearance from pollution control, registration of bio pesticides etc. As he was not an engineer, the assignment was a challenge him but he found it very interesting. He got full support and cooperation from colleagues and seniors.

Jaipal Singh left NTGCF in 1998 and joined ARAVALI- a NGO promoted by Rajasthan Government to work on Natural Resource Management as Program Director. This was a new area for him but he found it extremely interesting and useful. Along with his colleagues he worked well and established ARAVALI as a link between NGOs and State Government. Later he was made Executive Director of ARAVALI. Working there was extremely challenging for him- one side was Government which does not move an inch without completing all formalities and on other side were NGOs who hate every inch of formality. This place was very good for him to learn about government functioning from inside, besides he also got opportunity to know a number of civil servants and many of them are still good friends to him. He remained in ARAVALI till 2005 and tried to strengthen NGO sector and to promote Go-NGO collaboration.

Towards the end of 2005, he joined as an Executive Director in Centre for microFinance (CmF), Jaipur. Since then he is in CmF and built it as a resource/ knowledge agency which is actively engaged in capacity building (training), research, policy advocacy and networking besides incubating ideas in microfinance for up-scaling.

In his more than 20 years of journey in development sector, Jaipal Singh has got opportunities to work with various stakeholders of development such as the community, government, non-government agencies and has contributed to the growth of the communities with which he is working in a sustainable way.

***Information till November 2010**

‘Aajeevika’ Rajiv Khandelwal

From a management professional to becoming a social entrepreneur, Rajiv Khandelwal, Executive Director of Aajeevika Bureau, an organisation providing services to migrant workers, has got the Social Entrepreneur of the Year 2010 Award and is planning to join hands with similar organizations to bring his work to a national scale.

Rajiv Khandelwal was born in a traditional merchant family in Delhi. He has completed his school education from Delhi Public School during 1969-82. Though he groomed to follow his father's foot steps, he was reluctant to do so. This stemmed from his time as a student of commerce in college when, for the first time, he was exposed to "social realities" and mingled with students from vastly different backgrounds. During that time he volunteered with an organization that worked with physically challenged children.



Defying the family expectation that he study chartered accountancy, Rajiv joined the premier Institute of Rural Management at Anand in Gujarat for his postgraduate degree which he completed in the year 1987. Frequent field assignments took him to the interiors of Gujarat and Rajasthan where he encountered oppressive social systems and harsh poverty.

After graduation, he worked with the Centre for Environment Education setting up their Ranthambhore project in Sawaimadhopur district. He later moved to Udaipur and worked for agencies such as Astha and Ubeswar Vikas Mandal. He worked as a Director of Ubeswar Vikas Mandal, a local group formed by tribal youth in Udaipur district of Rajasthan. During his association with Ubeswar Vikas Mandal he was involved in generating community awareness, capacity building and community based land and water resource management programs etc.

After taking a short break upon his father's death to financially help his family, Rajiv returned to Udaipur and with a friend in 1998 and set up a research and consulting firm; Sudrak, to help other organizations in the sector develop strategies and plans on livelihood and other development issues. However, he soon realized that short term associations make little difference in the lives of the rural poor. Rajiv has witnessed the hardships of the rural poor and felt compelled to fight for their Right to Decent Work. For Rajiv, the rational route to solving problems of rural poverty lay in direct services to address specific needs, and thus the Aajeevika Bureau was born in the year 2004 with its headquarters at Udaipur.

Aajeevika Bureau (Livelihood Bureau) is among the first attempts in north India to provide support services to the millions of unskilled laborers and migrants who seasonally move across the country in search of work. The bureau seeks to protect the livelihoods and dignity of these migrants and reinforce their valid identity as legitimate contributors to the nation's economy.

While migration and relocation have been integral to human history, seasonal migration is a growing phenomenon in India today. With no fixed destination and a lack of marketable skills, this floating faceless population of migrants is exploited by contractors and middlemen and remains in a perpetual cycle of debt. Seasonal migrants, says Rajiv Khandelwal, are "environmental refugees" who exist outside the formal political and economic system.

Rajiv has set up the Aajeevika Bureau to address the above realities and help transform the nature of migration. Rajiv's target group is the seasonal, unskilled migrants who spend a total of more than three months away from their villages for 10 to 18 days at a time taking unskilled jobs that pay an average of Rs 60. The bureau examines the specific needs of these migrants and equips them with basic skills that allow them to get more dignified city jobs that pay higher wages. The skills in which Aajeevika trains the migrants include plumbing, masonry, carpentry, electrical wiring and gardening etc. It also provides destination counselling and assists with job placement, in addition to offering health, education, remittances and legal aid services.

Over five years, more than 50,000 ultra-poor seasonal migrants have directly accessed the Bureau's services, registering 50-80% growth in their incomes as well as increased citizenship entitlements. Additionally, Aajeevika's model has been replicated by more than 30 civil society organizations in Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Rajiv's efforts were successful in bringing up the issue of skilled migrant workers to be recognized by people at all levels and also in nurturing the Aajeevika into a replicable and scalable model. He would like to see his model to grow as a national movement for the benefit of the informal workers across the country and is continuing with a hope that several similar organizations join hands with him to make this happen. He is also planning to expand their service horizon to bring more and more workers into Aajeevika's fold.

***Information till December 2010**

Joe Madiath in ‘Gram Vikas’

From the most developed Kerala state to Odisha, one of the least developed states of India, the journey of Joe Madiath is inspiring and the path he had laid to Gram Vikas (Development of village) is followed by many development workers across the country.

Joe Madiath was born on December 1950 at Cheruvally, Kerala, India. Recognizing the poor conditions workers faced on his family farms, Joe Madiath at the age of 12 led a movement to organize them to lobby for better treatment. His confrontational role was met with hostility as his family banished him to a boarding school 2,500 km away from home. When he returned at age 16, Madiath embarked on a bicycle tour across India, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka and worked with tribal people along the way to improve their conditions. He completed his studies in English Literature at Madras University. When he was a student, he was elected as the President of the Loyola College Student Union and founded the “Young Students Movement for Development (YSMD) to serve the poor people.



Joe in 1971 led 400 YSMD volunteers to coordinate a number of relief camps for refugees who came from Bangladesh. Later that year, 40 volunteers along with Joe, moved to Odisha, which had been ravaged by a cyclone and tidal waves. Joe and a few colleagues decided to stay on in the area afterwards, to work as development activists. They moved to Ganjam District in southern Odisha in 1976 on the invitation of the Government, to initiate development activities among the indigenous communities of Odisha.

Joe founded an NGO called Gram Vikas in 1979 to serve to the poorest communities in Odisha. Since its inception, Joe has been the Executive Director of Gram Vikas. Today Gram Vikas is one of the largest NGOs in Odisha, reaching out to about 314,458 indigenous and poor families living in 943 rural habitations as on 31st March 2010. Joe initiated number of programs under Gram Vikas. Some of the pioneering efforts of Gram Vikas have been in bio gas promotion, community forestry, rural habitat development and education. Gram Vikas set 55000 bio gas systems to provide less expensive fuel to the villagers. Through its Movement and Action Network for Transformation in Rural Areas (MANTRA), Gram Vikas helps to build low cost drinking water and proper sanitation facilities to in 787 villages. As a result every family of the project area got bathroom, toilet and safe water facilities. It reduced their health expenditure drastically. Gram Vikas current approach to converge community action with water and sanitation as the entry point is evolving into a movement influencing local democratic self-governance and poor people’s control over development processes.

The core methodology of Gram Vikas is to harness, through full community mobilization, all physical and human capital in a village. The organization works with the villagers to create and manage a "village corpus", a fund that draws cash and in-kind contributions from all families based on their ability to pay. Once the fund is established, the organization contributes supplementary resources or makes soft loans for specific projects.

Joe Madiath is also one of the founders of the Voluntary Association Network of India and the Odisha Development Action Forum. He currently serves on the Governing Board of several institutions including the Council for Advancement of Peoples Action and Rural Technologies (CAPART), the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and BASIX. He has been part of various consultative committees of the central and state governments.

Gram Vikas and Joe Madiath have received several national and international awards in recognition of their work, including the Allan Shawn Feinstein World Hunger Award for 1995-96 from Brown University, USA; the Dr. K.S. Rao Memorial National Award, 1998 for outstanding Lifetime contribution to the development of new and renewable sources of energy from the Solar Energy Society of India. In 2005, Joe was awarded the Social Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to improving the plight of the rural masses, from The Godfrey Phillips Red & White Bravery Awards.

Joe Madiath has spent about 30 years working for the development of poorest communities of Odisha state. His unquenchable focus on the sustainable development of the villages is bearing fruits and transforming the lives of many poor households.

***Information till January 2011**

Engineering Rural Development – Elango

In a nation where collective finger pointing at politicians, grieving at the slowness of democracy and deriding India itself are fashionable, Rangaswamy Elango, an Engineer who chose to return to his village and serve as a politician, is an object lesson. He believed in Gram Swaraj and transformed the face of his village on the principles of cooperation and collective action.

Elango was born on Nov 12, 1960 in Kuthambakkam village of Tamil Nadu. As a student, Elango was very good and so entered the A C College of Technology, Chennai to study Chemical Engineering. Being a Dalit, he faced severe humiliations from many and to face those humiliations, he formed youth clubs, stuck wall posters with reformist messages, organized study groups, gave special tuitions and tried a number of other heart-achingly inadequate activities.



The first technical graduate from Kuthambakkam was grabbed from the campus in 1982 by Oil India and posted in an exploration site in Orissa. For most young men in India to be on such a promising career belt is dream come true but Elango found himself tethered to his village. A brief holiday revealed his youth club members were drifting away. He quit his job and joined the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research [CSIR] in Chennai. Commutes to his village began again. His youth club revived. In a while Elango was married to a young lady Sumathy who was a chemistry graduate. Two baby girls arrived in quick succession. By then Elango had visualized a long term road map. He and Sumathy had many conversations and agreed on a plan. They would make a home in Chennai, he would take care of the children and she would do her Masters in chemistry. Then she would find a job and provide for the family and he would return full time to the village.

In 1994, Sumathy got a job in the Oil and Natural Gas Commission [ONGC] and Elango promptly quit his. He returned to his village, contested in Panchayat elections and won. But despite his long term commitment to the village and work with harmonising it, he found the margin of victory disappointing. But he understood the powers at his disposal. He rolled up his sleeves. His objectives were two: create jobs and bring in hope.

At that time, there was a factory in the outskirts of his village that polished granite slabs. It had a huge disposal problem with its random off cuts. It was willing to pay for it to be carried away. Engineer, President Elango was delighted. He employed local labour, and built a drain which had smooth granite mosaic walls. The 'colony' drained fast down the slick 2 km long works. Of the budgeted Rs.15 Lakh for this project Elango had spent just Rs. 4Lakh, half of which went in wages for local people. But, the specification was to build the drain with rubble stones from a nearby hill. He had violated 'prescribed norms'. In other words, he had deprived transporters their ferrying opportunity and contractors their civil works one. Vested interests worked overtime. Elango was suspended from office under Section 205 of the Tamil Nadu Panchayat Act [TNPA]. He was devastated and thought of going back. But his wife encouraged him to continue and gave him Mahatma Gandhi's Autobiography 'My Experiments with Truth' which has become his guide for future. He protested against his suspension in Gandhian way and Government had to revoke his suspension.

There has been no looking back since then. Elango was re-elected with a huge majority at the end of five years. The graft mafia ran away. Officials backed his approach of cutting out contractors and employing locals instead. As he created jobs, liquor menace receded. He had always paid above the market average, currently Rs.70 per day; and most revolutionarily, precisely the same for women. He mastered the Tamil Nadu Panchayat Act and availed of every scheme for the village. He has been an efficient conduit between his people and available opportunities. He encouraged his people to use one of the Tamil Nadu governments' housing scheme called Samathuvapurams and these houses at his village are about 40% larger, better designed and comparatively constructed at a very low cost using local material and labour. So it is with all activities in Kuthambakkam. Extensive water management works, processing of agricultural produce, collective businesses run by women, all emphasize local involvement.

Influenced by JC Kumarappa, Elango has been evolving an economic theory of village clusters (network growth economy model). In simple terms about seven or eight villages form a free trade zone. They identify and produce goods and services without overlap. They consume each other's produce. And the money stays back and gets invested in human development. He also has an appropriate technology development centre in the village. He has contributed to his village development in many other ways as well such as promoting SHGs, constructing rain water harvesting structures and also by generating employment through cottage industries.

Now, Elango is leading the effort to educate and sensitize more Sarpanches to take collective action-based village development and Gram Swaraj.

Rangaswamy Elango and his village Kuthambakkam offers hope to India. One can confidently assume that India can bring out all its poor from poverty and can be a developed nation only if we had a few more Elangos.

***Information till February 2011**

SEWA's Jayashree Vyas

Jayashree Ashwini Kuma Vyas, Managing Director of SEWA bank, has been serving the poor women entrepreneurs for more than two decades. With her strong and visionary leadership, she has taken this bank founded by poor women entrepreneurs themselves to newer heights and is making a difference to the lives of those women.

Jayashree Vyas was born on July 03, 1953 in the state of Gujarat. She completed her graduation in Commerce and is a qualified Chartered Accountant.

After completing her C.A. course with specialization in Advanced Accountancy and Financial Management, she joined the Central Bank of India at Ahmedabad in 1980 as a Financial Analyst where her job responsibilities included appraisal of credit proposals from large industrial units and recommending the deserving cases for credit support by the Bank.



Vyas has been a member of the Board of Trustees of Women's World banking since 1998. She is a Member of the Task Force on Housing Finance for the Poor, and a Board Member of National Housing Bank. She has made presentation of the above areas of work at various National and International Fora.

Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's ideology, Jayashree joined Shree Mahila Sewa Sahakari (SWEA) Bank (SEWA bank was founded in 1974 by 4000 members of Self Employed Women's Association of Ahmedabad each contributing ten rupees) as its Managing Director in the year 1986. During her work at SEWA Bank spanning more than two decades, Jayashree has implemented various innovative programs aimed at providing access for self employed women to credit, secure savings, insurance and housing.

During her tenure in the bank, she has taken active steps to introduce and operate an integrated social security scheme for women working in the informal sector. This scheme - the first in India - has covered more than 150,000 women in three years. Vyas has also devised and implemented various technical and housing finance schemes that have been accessed by over 20,000 poor women. She has introduced, organized and managed savings groups of poor women in more than 5,000 villages in nine districts of Gujarat. This scheme has helped more than 150,000 women start saving for the first time in their lives, and provided credit facilities to help them come out of poverty.

Vyas has also prepared training modules and manuals for the running of effective saving and credit programs by various national voluntary organizations. The bank has now more than 200,000 women clients and Jayashree's leadership and direction has taken the bank to the newer heights and helped its expansion to such large client base.

With her quality financial and managerial skills she has been able to provide strategic guidance to the overall working of the Bank. SEWA Bank has created a holistic approach to helping women achieve independence through microfinance linked with the health, education, legal support and other supplementary programs of SEWA – the NGO.

Jayashree's rich experience in microfinance sector made her to be on the board of Indian School of Microfinance for Women where she actively contributes to capacity building programs. Vyas is one of the Promoter Directors of Ananya Finance for Inclusive Growth (P) Ltd. She is also board member of Invest India Micro Pension Services Pvt. Ltd. - Pension and Insurance Products Company for low income workers.

Vyas has been a member of the Board of Trustees of Women's World Banking since 1998. She is a Member of the Task Force on Housing Finance for the Poor, and a Board Member of National Housing Bank. She has made presentation of the above areas of work at various National and International Fora. She is also serving on the boards of several national level organizations such as National Narrative Management Organization, Citi group Centre for Financial Literacy etc. Jayashree Vyas received award in 1993-94 for "Outstanding Woman Entrepreneur" by FICCI Ladies Organization India.

Gandhiji was always saying that if, at all, reform is going to come it is going to come from women. He always had hope for the women. Jayashree says that "we, at SEWA, are also keeping women in the centre. We have the simplicity and the messages which values he has put in the whole country. We have been following lots of values but we trust in women's power and we feel that it is the rural area and it is the poor, the rural people, who are going to change the country". However, she strongly feels that, total poverty removal is not possible without government intervention and microfinance alone cannot make that happen.

These words come from her experiences in dealing with poverty for more than two decades and thus have greater significance. These words remind us the importance for both government and non-government organizations to complement and supplement each other's efforts for creating a poverty free society.

***Information till March 2011**